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Frederick Frost

A birthday present  
from his mother

1869

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.







"DON'T GIVE TOO MUCH FOR THE WHISTLE."

*(Franklin's Proverb.)*



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,  
THE PRINTER-BOY.

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EDINBURGH:  
WILLIAM P. NIMMO.



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# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,

## The Printer-Boy.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE FIRST POCKET-MONEY.

IT was a bright welcome holiday to little Benjamin Franklin, when his kind parents gave him some coppers to spend as he pleased. Possibly it was the first time he was ever permitted to go out alone into the streets of Boston with money to spend for his own pleasure; for he was now but seven years old.

"Can I have more coppers when these are gone?" he inquired.

"No," replied his mother; "you have quite as many now as will be for your welfare, I think. You must be a good boy, and keep out of mischief."

"Lay out your money wisely, Benjamin. I shall want to see how much wisdom you display in your purchases. Remember 'all is not gold that glitters.'"

Like other boys, on such occasions, his head was filled with bewitching fancies, and he evidently expected such a

day of joy as he never had before. First in his thoughts stood the toy-shop, into the windows of which he had often looked wistfully.

Benjamin, on going out to spend his money, had not proceeded far before he met a boy blowing upon a whistle. He could scarcely help envying the boy the happiness of owning so valuable a treasure. He stopped and looked at him with an expression of delight, and they exchanged glances that shewed a genuine sympathy between them. At once he resolved to possess a whistle, and away he hastened to the toy-shop, knowing that he could purchase one there.

"Have you any whistles?" he inquired.

"Plenty of them," answered the proprietor, with a smile, as he brought forth a number, to the amazement of his little customer.

"I will give you all the money I have for one," said Benjamin, without waiting to inquire the price, so enthusiastic was he to become the possessor of such a prize.

"How much money have you?" asked the shopkeeper.

Benjamin told him honestly just how much he had, and the merchant gave him a whistle in exchange for it.

Never was a child more delighted than he, when the bargain was made. He tried every whistle, that he might select the one having the most music in it; and when his choice was settled, he turned his steps towards home. He reached home and hurried into the house, blowing his whistle lustily as he went, as if he expected to astonish the whole race of Franklins by the shrillness, if not by the sweetness of his music.



"What have you there, Benjamin?" inquired his mother.

"A whistle," he answered, hardly stopping his blowing long enough to give a reverent reply.

"How much did you give for your whistle?" asked one of his cousins, who was present.

"All the money I had," he replied.

"What!" exclaimed his brother, "did you give all your money for that little whistle?"

"Yes," replied Benjamin.

"You are not half so sharp as I thought you were," continued his brother. "It is four times as much as the whistle is worth."

"You should have asked the price of it," said his mother. "Some men will take all the money they can get for an article. Perhaps he did not ask so much as you gave for it."

"If you had given a reasonable price for it," said his brother, "you might have had enough left to have bought a pocketful of good things. I must confess you are a smart fellow, Ben, to be taken in like that," continued his brother, rather deridingly. "All your money for that worthless thing, that is enough to make us crazy! You ought to know better."

By this time Benjamin, who had said nothing in reply to their taunts and reproofs, was running over with vexation, and he burst into tears, and made even more noise by crying than he had done with his whistle. Their ridicule, and the thought of having paid so much more than he ought for

the article, overcame him. His mother came to the rescue, by saying,

“Never mind, Benjamin, you will understand better next time. We must all live and learn. Perhaps you did about as well as most boys of your age would.”

On the whole, it was really a benefit that Benjamin paid too much for his whistle. For he learned a lesson thereby which he never forgot. It destroyed his happiness on that holiday, but it saved him from much unhappiness in years to come. More than sixty years afterwards, when he was in France, he wrote to a friend, rehearsing this incident of his childhood, and said:—

“This, however, was afterwards of use to me, the impression continuing on my mind; so that often, when I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, *Don't give too much for the whistle*; and I saved my money.

“As I grew up, came into the world, and observed the actions of men, I thought I met with many, very many, who *gave too much for the whistle*.

“When I saw another fond of popularity, constantly employing himself in political bustles, neglecting his own affairs, and ruining them by that neglect, *He pays indeed*, said I, *too much for his whistle*.

“If I see one fond of appearance, or fine clothes, fine houses, fine furniture, fine equipages, all above his fortune, for which he contracts debts, and ends his career in a prison, *Alas*, say I, *he has paid dear, very dear, for his whistle*.”

“In short, I conceive that great part of the miseries of mankind are brought upon them by the false estimates they have made of the value of things, and by their *giving too much for their whistle.*”

Thus Benjamin made a good use of one of the foolish acts of his boyhood, which tells well for both his head and heart. Many boys are far less wise, and do the same foolish thing over and over again. They never learn wisdom from the past. Poor, simple, pitiable class of boys !

Let the reader prove himself another Benjamin Franklin in this respect. Remember that there is more than one way to *pay too dear for a whistle*, and he is wisest who tries to discover them all.

When a boy equivocates, or deceives, to conceal some act of disobedience from his parents or teachers, and thereby lays the foundations for habitual untruthfulness, he pays too dear for the whistle ; and he will learn the truth of it when he becomes older, and cannot command the confidence of his friends and neighbours, but is branded by them as an unreliable, dishonest man.

So, in general, the young person who is fascinated by worldly pleasure, and supposes that wealth and honour are real apples of gold to the possessor, thinking less of goodness and a life of piety than he does of mere show and worldliness, will find that he has been playing with a costly whistle, when age and his last sickness comes, and death confronts him with its stern realities.

## CHAPTER II.

## EARLY SCHOOL DAYS.

"WELL, Benjamin," said his father, laying down his violin, upon which he was wont to play in the evening, for his own and children's amusement, "how should you like to go to school and qualify yourself to be a minister? You are as fond of your books as James is of printing, or John of making candles!"

"I should like to go to school very well," replied Benjamin, after some hesitation.

"You are old enough now," continued his father, "to think about a trade or profession. Your elder brothers have their trades, and perhaps you ought to give your service to the Church. You like to study, do you not?"

"Yes, father, I do indeed."

"It will cost a good deal to keep you at school and educate you, and perhaps I shall not be able to do it with so large a family to support. I have to be very industrious now to make my ends meet. But if you are diligent to improve your time, and lend a helping hand at home, out of school hours, I may be able to do it."

"When shall I begin, if you decide to let me go?"

"Immediately. It is a long process to become qualified for the ministry, and the sooner you begin the better."

"Uncle Benjamin," as he was called in the family, a brother of our little hero's father, sat listening to the conversation, and at this point remarked, "Yes, Benjamin, it is

the best thing you can do. I am sure you can make very rapid progress at school; and there ought to be one preacher in the family, I think."

"So many people have told me," added his father. "Dr Willard (his pastor) said as much to me not long ago, and I am fully persuaded to make the trial."

"It won't be a severe trial either," said Uncle Benjamin. "The thing can be accomplished more easily than at first appears. I tell you what it is, Benjamin," addressing himself to the boy, "when you are qualified for the office, I will give you my large volume of short-hand sermons, and the reading of these will improve your manner of sermonizing."

This interview occurred above one hundred and fifty years ago, between Benjamin Franklin, who paid too much for the whistle, and his father, whose Christian name was Josiah. The lad was eight years old at the time, a bright, active, intelligent boy, who was more fond of reading than any other child in the family. He was born in Boston, on Sunday, January 6, 1706.

He was named after his uncle, and this circumstance alone was well suited to beget a mutual interest and attachment between them. His love of books early attracted the attention of his parents and others, and they regarded him as a precocious child. On this account the remark was often volunteered, "that he ought to be sent to college."

We have said that Mr Franklin was playing upon his violin on the evening of the aforesaid interview. He was very fond of music, was a good singer, and performed well upon the violin. He was wont to gather his family around

him during the leisure hours of evening, and sing and play. Many cheerful and happy seasons were passed in this way at the fireside, the influence of which was excellent upon his children.

That it would be doubtful whether he could meet the expense of sending Benjamin to college, must appear to the reader, when he learns that he was a labouring man, and had a family of seventeen children, thirteen of whom sat around his table together at one time. Fourteen were older than Benjamin, and two were younger. To support so large a family must have taxed the energies of the father to the utmost, even though no one of them was destined for a learned profession.

It was arranged that Benjamin should immediately enter school, and enjoy the best literary advantages which the poverty of his father could provide. He acceded to the plan with hearty good-will, and commenced his studies with a zeal and enthusiasm such as few scholars exhibit.

"I have seen the teacher to-day," said Mr Franklin to his wife, two or three months after his son entered school, "and he says that he is making rapid progress, and will soon stand first in his class, although others have enjoyed much better advantages."

"I am glad to hear it," answered Mrs Franklin, with a satisfied air, such as mothers are likely to betray when they know that their children are doing well; "I think he will make a good scholar if he can have the opportunity, though I scarcely see how you will be able to educate him."

"I can hardly see how myself," said her husband; "yet



I trust that God will provide a way. At any rate, I hope for the best."

"It will be more and more expensive every year to support him," added Mrs Franklin, "since his clothes will cost more as he advances in years. The least expense in educating him we are having now."

"That is very true, and I have looked at the matter in this light, all the while not being able to see my way quite clear, yet trusting to providence for a happy issue."

Within a few months after Benjamin entered school, he had advanced from the middle to the head of his class. He was so apt to learn, and gave so close attention to his lessons, that his teacher spoke of him as a boy of uncommon promise. He did not stand at the head of his class long, however, before he was transferred to a higher one. He so far outstripped his companions, that the teacher was obliged to advance him thus, otherwise his mental progress would have been injuriously retarded. His parents were highly gratified with his diligent improvement of time and opportunities, and other relatives and friends began to prophesy his future eminence.

It is generally the case that such early attention to studies, in connexion with the advancement that follows, awakens high hopes of the young in the hearts of all observers. Such things foreshadow the future character, so that people think they can tell what the man will be from what the boy is. So it was with young Benjamin Franklin.

It was quite natural, then, for the parents and friends of

Benjamin Franklin to be encouraged by his love of books, and diligent attention, especially when so much intellectual brightness was also manifest. The sequel will prove whether their hopes were wisely cherished.

Benjamin had not been in school quite a year, when his father saw plainly that he would not be able to defray the expense of educating him.

"I might keep him along for the present," said he to his wife, "but I am satisfied that I cannot carry him through. My family expenses are now very great, and they will be still larger. It will make considerable difference in my expenses whether Benjamin is kept at school, or assists me by the labour of his hands."

"I am sorry for Benjamin," continued Mrs Franklin, "for he has become much interested in his school, and it will be a great disappointment to him."

"I thought of that much before coming to my present decision; but there is no alternative. Providence seems to indicate, now, the course I should take, and I am the more willing to follow, because the times do not hold out so much encouragement to those who would enter the service of the Church. There are many trials and hardships to be met in the work, and at the present day they seem to be peculiar."

"There are trials almost anywhere in these times," said Mrs Franklin, "and I suppose we ought to bear them with fortitude."

This subject was very thoroughly considered before it was opened to Benjamin. His father was too anxious to educate

him to change his purpose without much patient thought and circumspection. Nothing but absolute necessity induced him to come to this decision.

One evening, as the school term was drawing to a close, Mr Franklin said to Benjamin,

“I think I shall be under the necessity of taking you away from school at the close of the term. The times are so hard, that I find, with my best exertions, I can do little more than supply you with food and clothes.”

“And not go to school any more?” anxiously inquired Benjamin.

“Perhaps not. Such appears to be your prospect now, though I cannot say that God may not open a way hereafter; I hope He will.”

“Why can I not attend school till I am old enough to help you?”

“You are old enough to help me now. I could find plenty for you to do every day, so that you could make yourself very useful.”

“But I do not intend to set you to work immediately,” continued Mr Franklin. “You must give some attention to penmanship and arithmetic, and I shall send you to a writing-school for a season.”

“I shall like that, for I want to know how to write well,” said Benjamin.

“It is equally important that you learn to cipher. It will not take you many months to become a good penman, and to acquire considerable knowledge of numbers.”

“I care more about writing than I do about arithmetic,”

said Benjamin. "I don't think I shall like arithmetic very well."

"People have to study many things they don't like," responded his father. "It is the only way they can qualify themselves for business. You would not make much of an appearance in the world without some acquaintance with numbers."

"I know that," said Benjamin; "and I shall try to master it, even if I do not like it. I am willing to do what you think is best."

"I hope you will always be as willing to yield to my judgment. It is a good sign for a boy to accept cheerfully the plans of his father, who has had more experience."

Benjamin was generally very prompt to obey his parents, even when he did not exactly see the necessity of their commands. He understood well that obedience was a law of the household, which could not be violated with impunity; therefore he wisely obeyed.

Benjamin was taken away from school, agreeably to his father's decision, and sent to perfect himself in arithmetic and penmanship. He had attended the grammar-school less than a year, and had little or no prospect of returning to his studies. But the disappointment was somewhat alleviated by the advantages offered at the writing-class. Here he made rapid progress in penmanship, though he failed in mastering the science of numbers. He had more taste, and perhaps tact, for penmanship than he had for arithmetical rules and problems, and this may account for the difference of his improvement in the two branches.

We should have remarked that Benjamin endeared himself to his teacher while he was a member of the public school, and it was with regret that the latter parted with his studious pupil. His close attention to his duties, and his habitual good deportment, in connexion with his progress, made him such a scholar as teachers love.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### MAKING CANDLES.

WHEN Benjamin was ten years old he could write a very good hand, and read fluently, though his knowledge of arithmetic was very limited.

“Are you about ready, Benjamin, to come into the shop and help me?” inquired his father, one day at the dinner table.

“Am I going to school any longer?” he asked.

“I think the close of this term will complete the education I am able to give you,” replied his father, with apparent regret.

“I had rather not go into the shop,” said Benjamin. “I think I shall not like to make candles, and I really wish you would engage in some other business.”

“And starve, too,” said his father. “In such times as these we must be willing to do what will insure us a livelihood. I know of no other business that would give me a

living at present, certainly none that I am qualified to pursue."

"Well, I should rather make soap and candles than starve," said Benjamin; "but nothing else could make me willing to follow the business."

"One other thing ought to make you willing to do such work," added his father. "You had better do this than do nothing, for idleness is the parent of vice. Boys like you should be industrious, even if they do not earn their bread. It is better for them to work for nothing than not to work at all. It is so important for the young to form industrious habits, that they had better work for nothing than be idle. If they are idle when they are young, they will be so when they become men, and idleness will finally be their ruin. 'The devil tempts all other men, but idle men tempt the devil,' is an old and truthful proverb."

Mr Franklin has been a close observer all his life, and he had noticed that industry was characteristic of those who accomplished anything commendable. Consequently, he insisted that his children should have employment. He allowed no drones in his family hive. All had something to do as soon as they were old enough to toil. Under such influences Benjamin was reared, and he grew up to be as much in love with industry as his father was. Some of his best counsels, and most interesting sayings, when he became a man, related to this subject. The following are among the maxims which he uttered in his riper years:—

"Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labour wears; while the used key is always bright."



“But dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.”

“If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be the greatest prodigality.”

“Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all easy; and he that ariseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night; while laziness travels so slowly, that poverty soon overtakes him.”

“At the working man’s house hunger looks in, but dares not enter.”

“Diligence is the mother of good luck, and God gives all things to industry.”

“One to-day is worth two to-morrows.”

“Drive thy business, let not thy business drive thee.”

“God helps them that help themselves.”

But we need not enlarge upon these sayings of Franklin. They are all charged with wisdom, and might be expanded into volumes. The more we study them, the more beauty we perceive.

It was settled that Benjamin should assist his father in the manufacture of candles, notwithstanding his disinclination to engage in the business. His prospects of more schooling were thus cut off at ten years of age, and now he was obliged to turn his attention to hard work. It was rather an unpromising future to a little boy. No more schooling after ten years of age! What small opportunities in comparison with those enjoyed by nearly every boy at the present day! Now they are just beginning to learn at this early age. From ten they can look forward to six or eight

years of golden opportunities in the school-room. Does the young reader appreciate the privileges which he enjoys?

“To-morrow for the work-shop, Benjamin!” exclaimed Mr Franklin, with a tone of pleasantry, on the evening before he was initiated into the mysteries of making candles. “I am very busy, and require assistance very much at present.”

“You can’t expect much from me,” said Benjamin, “till I learn how to do the work.”

“You can do what I shall set you about just as well as a boy, or even a man, who had worked at the business for a year.”

“I wonder what that can be that is so easy!” added Benjamin, with some surprise.

“You can cut the wicks, fill the moulds for cast-candles, keep the shop in order, run hither and thither upon errands, and do other things that will save my time, and thus assist me just as much as a man could in doing the same things. You will aid me just as much in going errands, as in doing anything else. I have a good deal of such running to do, and if you do it, I can be employed in the more important part of my business, which no one else can attend to. Besides, your nimble feet can get over the ground much quicker than my older ones, so that you can really perform this part of the business better than I can myself.”

Benjamin made no reply to these last remarks, although he was more favourably impressed, after hearing them, with the tallow-chandler’s calling. On the following day he entered upon his new vocation, and if “variety is the spice of

life," then his first day in the shop had plenty of spice. He cut wicks, filled moulds, performed errands, and played the part of general waiter, in which there was much variety. And this was his work for successive weeks, very little of his time being unoccupied. Do you ask how he likes it? The following conversation with his mother will answer.

"I don't like it at all, mother,—no better than I thought I should," he said. "I wish I could do something else."

"What else is there for you to do, Benjamin?" replied his mother. "What would you like to do?"

"I would like to go to sea, on a voyage to Europe or the East Indies."

"What!" exclaimed his mother, exhibiting surprise, for she had not dreamed that her son had any inclination to go sea. "Want to be a sailor! What put that into your head?"

"I have always thought I should like to go to sea," he answered; "and I am so tired of making candles that I want to go now more than ever."

"I am astonished, Benjamin. You might know that I should never give my consent to that. And how you want to leave your good home, and all your friends, to live in a ship, exposed to storms and death all the time?"

"It is not because I do not love my home and friends, but I have a desire to sail on a voyage to some other country. I like the water, and nothing would suit me so well as to be a cabin-boy."

"There, Benjamin, you must never say another word about it," continued his mother; "and you must not think

any more about going ; for I shall never give my consent, and I know your father never will.

Benjamin had said nothing about this matter to his father, and this prompt veto of his mother put a damper on his hopes, so that he continued to work at the shop, with all his dislike for the business. His parents talked over the matter, and his father was led thereby to watch him more carefully, that he might nip the first buddings of desire for the sea. At length, however, Benjamin ventured to make known his wishes to his father.

“I have thought, father,” said he, “that I should like to go to sea, if you are willing ;” and there he stopped, evidently expecting to be refused.

“What has happened to lead you to desire this ?” inquired his father.

“Not anything,” he answered. “I always thought I should like it,—though I have had a stronger desire lately.”

“I see how it is,” continued his father. “You have been to the water with the boys frequently of late, and I have noticed that you loved to be in a boat better than to make candles. I am afraid that your sports on the water are making you dissatisfied with your home, and that here is the secret of your wanting to go to sea.”

“No, father ; I think as much of my home as I ever did, and I like a boat no better now than I did the first time I got into one.”

“Perhaps it is so ; but boys don’t always know when they are losing their attachment to home. You need not say another syllable, however, about going to sea, for I shall

never consent to it. You may as well relinquish at once all thought of going, since I strictly forbid your laying any such plans. If you do not wish to be a tallow-chandler, you may try some other business. I shall not insist upon your working with me, though I shall insist upon your following some calling."

"I shall not want to go to sea against your wishes," said Benjamin. "I only thought I would go if you and mother were perfectly willing. I can work at this dirty trade too, if you think it is best, though I can never like it."

"I am glad to see that you have so much regard for your parents' wishes," said his father. "If your brother had been as considerate, he never would have become a sailor. Children should always remember that their parents know best, as they have had more experience and time to observe. I say again, if you will abandon all thoughts of a seafaring life, I will try to find you a situation to learn some trade you may choose for yourself."

Benjamin was not disposed to enter upon a sailor's life contrary to his parents' counsels, and he submitted to his father's decision with as much cheerfulness and good feeling as could be expected in the circumstances. He knew that it was little use to tease his father when he said "no" to a project. His emphatic "no" usually put an end to all controversy.

There is little doubt that Benjamin had been somewhat influenced by his frolics in and on the water. For some time, as opportunity offered, he had been down to the water to bathe, and had become an expert swimmer in a very

short time, and not one of the boys so readily learned to manage a boat. He exhibited so much tact in these water feats, that he was usually regarded as a leader by the boys, and all matters of importance were referred to his judgment. It was not strange, therefore, that he should be more in love with an ocean life after such pastimes with his comrades.

It was certainly a poor prospect that was before the young tallow-chandler. It was not a trade to call into exercise the higher and nobler faculties of the mind and heart. On that account, no one could expect that Benjamin would rise to much distinction in the world; and this will serve to awaken the reader's surprise as he becomes acquainted with the sequel.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### HABITS OF READING.

WE have referred to Benjamin's habit of reading. It had been his custom to spend his evenings, and other leisure moments, in reading. He was much pleased with voyages, and such writings as John Bunyan's. The first books he possessed were the works of Bunyan, in separate little volumes. After becoming familiar with them, he sold them, in order to obtain the means to buy "Burton's Historical Collections," which were small, cheap books, forty volumes



in all. His father also possessed a good number of books for those times, when books were rare, and these he read through, although most of them were really beyond his years, being controversial writings upon theology. His love of reading was so great, that he even read works of this character with a degree of interest. In the library, however, were three or four books of somewhat different character. There was "Plutarch's Lives," in which he was deeply interested; also Defoe's "Essay on Projects." But to no one book was he more indebted than to Dr Mather's "Essay to Do Good." From this he derived hints and sentiments which had a beneficial influence upon his after life. He said, forty or fifty years afterwards, "It gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life," And he wrote to a son of Cotton Mather, "I have always set a greater value on the character of a doer of good, than on any other kind of reputation; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book." Some of the sentiments of the book which particularly impressed him were as follows:—"It is possible that the wisdom of a poor man may start a proposal that may save a city, save a nation." "A mean (humble) mechanic,—who can tell what an engine of good he may be, if humbly and wisely applied unto it?" "The remembrance of having been the man that first moved a good law, were better than a statue erected for one's memory." These, and similar thoughts, stimulated his mind to action, and really caused him to attempt what otherwise would have been impossible.



The habit of spending leisure hours in poring over books, has saved many boys from vice and ruin. Many more might have been saved, if they had been so fond of books as to stay at home in the evenings to read. It is an excellent habit to form, and tends to preserve the character unsullied, while it stores the mind with useful knowledge.

We shall see, as we advance, that Benjamin became very systematic and economical in the use of his time, that he might command every moment possible to read. The benefit he derived from the exercise when he was young, caused him to address the following letter, many years thereafter, to a bright, intelligent girl of his acquaintance. The letter, being devoted to "*Advice on Reading*," is a valuable one to young persons now.

"I send my good girl the books I mentioned to her last night. I beg of her to accept of them as a small mark of my esteem and friendship. They are written in the familiar and easy manner for which the French are so remarkable, and afford a good deal of philosophic and practical knowledge, unembarrassed with the dry mathematics used by more exact reasoners, but which is apt to discourage young beginners.

"I would advise you to read with a pen in your hand, and enter in a little book short hints of what you find that is curious, or that may be useful; for this will be the best method of imprinting such particulars on your memory, where they will be ready either for practice on some future occasion, if they are matters of utility, or at least to adorn and improve your conversation, if they are rather points of

curiosity ; and as many of the terms of science are such as you cannot have met with in your common reading, and may therefore be unacquainted with, I think it would be well for you to have a good dictionary at hand, to consult immediately when you meet with a word you do not comprehend the the precise meaning of.

“ This may, at first, seem troublesome and interrupting ; but it is a trouble that will daily diminish, as you will daily find less and less occasion for your dictionary, as you become more acquainted with the terms ; and, in the meantime, you will read with more satisfaction, because with more understanding. When any point occurs in which you would be glad to have further information than your book affords you, I beg that you would not in the least apprehend that I should think it a trouble to receive and answer your questions. It will be a pleasure and no trouble. For though I may not be able, out of my own little stock of knowledge, to afford you what you require, I can easily direct you to the books where it may most readily be found. Adieu, and believe me ever, my dear friend,

“ B. FRANKLIN.”

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## CHAPTER V.

### CHOOSING A TRADE.

“ You will have to be a tallow-chandler, after all, when your brother gets married and goes away,” said one of Benjamin’s associates to him. He had heard that an older son of Mr

Franklin, who worked at the business with his father, was about to be married, and would remove to Rhode Island, and set up business for himself.

“Not I,” replied Benjamin. “I shall work at it no longer than I am obliged to do.”

“That may be, and you be obliged to work at it all your life. It will be, as your father says, till you are twenty-one years old.”

“I know that; but my father does not desire to have me work in his shop against my wishes—only till I can find some other suitable employment. I would rather go to sea than anything.”

“Are your parents willing that you should go to sea?”

“No; they won’t hear a word about it. I have talked with them till it is of no use. They seem to think that I should be shipwrecked, or that something else would happen, to prevent my return.”

“Then, if you can’t go to sea, and you won’t be a tallow-chandler, what can you do?”

“I hardly know myself; but almost anything is preferable to this greasy business. If people had no more light than the candles I should make, unless I was obliged, they would have a pretty dark time of it.”

“I don’t think it is a very disagreeable business,” continued his companion. “It is quite easy work, certainly,—much more to my liking than sawing wood, and some other things I could name.”

“It may be easy,” replied Benjamin, “but it is dirty and simple. It requires no ingenuity to do all that I do.

Almost any simpleton could cut wicks and fill candle-moulds. A fellow who can't do it couldn't tell which side his bread is buttered. *I* prefer to do something that requires thought and ingenuity."

"There is something in that; but I think it will take all your ingenuity to work yourself out of the tallow-chandler's business," responded the friend, rather dryly.

This conversation occurred one day in the shop, when Mr Franklin was out. But just at this point he returned, and soon after the young visitor left. Benjamin was not acquainted with all his father's plans, and he had actually proceeded further than he was aware of towards introducing him into another calling, as the following conversation with his wife, on the previous evening, will shew:—

"I have resolved to find some other employment for Benjamin at once," said he; "as John is to be married so soon, he will be able to render me but little more assistance, and I must have some one to take his place."

"Are you satisfied," inquired Mrs Franklin, "that Benjamin cannot be prevailed upon to take the place of John in your shop?"

"Oh, yes! he is so dissatisfied with the business that I fear he will yet go to sea, unless his attention is soon turned to some other pursuit. Then, if he has a taste for any other honourable pursuit, I am willing that he should follow it. He would not accomplish much at candle-making with his present feelings."

"Have you anything in view for him to do?" asked Mrs Franklin.

“Not positively. I want to learn, if I can, whether he has taste and tact for any particular business. If he has, he will accomplish more in that. I don’t believe in compelling a boy to follow a pursuit for which he has no relish, unless it is where nothing else offers.”

“I think it is very necessary for boys to have a definite trade,” said Mrs Franklin; “they are now more likely to succeed than those who are changing often from one thing to another. ‘A rolling stone gathers no moss,’ is an old saying.”

“That is the principal reason for my plan to introduce him into some other business soon. No one feels the importance of this more than I do, and I have pretty thoroughly imbued the mind of Benjamin with the same views. I think he has a desire to follow a definite calling, though now his taste seems to draw him towards a seafaring life.”

Benjamin could have appreciated this last remark, if it had been uttered in his hearing. For he had listened to so much counsel upon this point, that he had no desire to run from one thing to another. And he continued to cherish this feeling. When he became a man, he wrote the following maxims, among the many of which he was the author:—

“He that hath a trade hath an estate.”

“He that hath a calling hath an office of honour.”

Here he taught the same lesson that he received from the lips of his father and mother when he was young. A trade is the assurance of a livelihood, however hard the times may be. As a general rule, they who follow trades

secure a living, when they who have none come to want and suffer.

But to return. Mr Franklin rather surprised Benjamin by saying, after his associate left the shop, "I have decided on finding some other business for you immediately, if possible. I hope to find some opening for your learning an agreeable trade."

"Where shall you go to find one?" inquired Benjamin, scarcely expecting to have his wishes gratified so early. "Have you any particular trade in view?"

"No, I want to consult your tastes about the matter first; and I propose to go to-morrow with you, to see what we can find."

"And I go with you, did you say?"

"Yes, I wish to have you witness some things to which I shall call your attention, and decide for yourself what calling to follow."

"Where will you go?" inquired Benjamin, deeply interested in the plan, as well he might be.

"I shall not go out of town. Boston furnishes good examples of the different trades, and we shall not be under the necessity of extending our researches beyond its limits. So to-morrow I think we will start."

Benjamin was delighted with the prospect of being delivered soon from the tallow-chandler's shop, and he anticipated the morrow with considerable impatience. He rejoiced when the light of the next morning came in at his chamber window, and brighter and earlier he was up to await his father's bidding. Suitable preparations were made,



and directly after breakfast they set forth upon their important errand. The first shop they visited was that of a joiner, where he saw the plane and hammer used to advantage. He had witnessed such labour before, and also seen other employments to which his father called his attention on that day; but he never observed these different trades with the object which now brought him to the shops. Having spent some time at the joiner's bench, he next went to a turner's place of business, where he saw different articles turned to order, in so rapid a manner as to surprise him. He was more interested in the turning-lathe and its rapid movement, than he was in the use of joiner's tools. Passing through a prominent street, after leaving the turner's, they came to an unfinished structure, on which bricklayers were employed. Here another trade was on exhibition, and Benjamin's attention was called to it, and the various kind of labour which this class of toilers were obliged to perform, were explained to him. In this way they visited other workshops, until they had seen the practical operations of the different trades, and Benjamin understood what kind of toil each required. One of the last shops they visited was that of Samuel Franklin, a son of Uncle Benjamin, and, of course, a cousin of Benjamin. He learned the trade of cutler in London, and had just come over and established himself in Boston. Benjamin was evidently more pleased with this kind of business than any he had seen on that day. Whether it grew out of boyish love for jack-knives, or was the consequence of closely observing the ingenious modes of manufacturing cutlery, we need not say. It is enough to



know, that he was partially captivated by the trade, and before they reached home his father was well satisfied which trade he would select, though he had not questioned him at all on this point.

“What trade have you decided to follow, Benjamin?” inquired his mother, as they sat at the tea-table.”

“I think any of them are better than making candles,” he replied; “although I like Samuel’s trade the best of all.”

“That is just what I expected,” said his father, laughingly. “I saw that you fell in love with his work, and I think myself that it is a very pleasant and promising business.”

“So you will decide to take that trade, will you?” said his mother.

“In preference to all the trades I have seen yet,” said Benjamin.

“He is after a pocket-knife,” interrupted John, who sat at the table, speaking in a vain of pleasantry. “I see clearly what has taken his eye.”

“I suppose John will never care more about a knife, now he is going to have a wife,” added Mr Franklin, addressing his remark to Benjamin, in order to help him out of the predicament into which John’s remark had placed him. “But did you not like the brazier’s business?”

“Yes, I liked it very well, but not so well as I do the cutler’s trade. If I can have my choice I shall choose that, and will begin to-morrow, if you are willing.”

“I shall make no objection, if that is your decision,”

replied his father. "I want you to weigh the matter carefully, however, and not be hasty in choosing."

"It remains to be seen whether Samuel will take him as an apprentice," said Mrs Franklin. "Perhaps he may not want one. He has just commenced, and cannot be doing much business yet."

"Father can easily learn that," said Benjamin. "He can see cousin Samuel to-morrow, and decide the matter at once."

"I will see him to-morrow," said his father, "and arrange for you to go into his shop if possible."

On the following day, Mr Franklin called upon Samuel, his nephew, and made known the wishes of Benjamin. Although it was a new and unexpected subject, yet he received it favourably, and finally decided that Benjamin might come immediately, and try his hand at this new business. He thought it was best for both parties that no definite agreement or bargain should be made until Benjamin had tried the work, to which his father assented.

Accordingly, Benjamin entered upon his new trade immediately, and was much pleased with it. It was so different from the work of candle-making, and required so much more thought and ingenuity, that he was prepared to pronounce it "first-rate." It was with a light and cheerful heart that he went to each day's task.

Mr Franklin acted wisely in consulting the inclination of his son about a trade. A boy may have more qualifications for one pursuit than another; and this will generally be made manifest in the bent of his mind. He will exhibit a

degree of tact for one calling, while he may be a blunderer at almost anything else. This characteristic is more remarkable with some boys than with others, and a disregard of it often entails unhappiness upon a whole family.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PRINTER-BOY.

AFTER Benjamin had worked at cutlery a suitable time, his father went to close the bargain, and make out the papers for his apprenticeship. But, to his surprise, his nephew demanded such conditions that Mr Franklin could not think of accepting his proposition; and the result was, that he took Benjamin away, much to his disappointment. The boy submitted to his father's decision, however, with a true filial obedience, evidently believing that he had good reasons for taking such a stand. Now he was neither a tallow-chandler nor a cutler, though not destined to be long without employment.

Just before this juncture, as if Providence ordered events on Benjamin's account, his brother James returned from England, where he had learned the printing trade. He brought with him a good press and type, in order to establish himself in Boston.

"How would you like to be a printer with your brother James?" inquired Mr Franklin of Benjamin. "I have

been thinking that it was a good thing you did not continue the cutlery business, because you have superior qualifications for this."

"What qualifications have I for this that I have not for the cutler's trade?" asked Benjamin.

"You are a good reader, and have an intellectual turn, being fond of books, and such things belonging to mental improvement as the trade of printer offers."

"I think I should like the business very well," added Benjamin. "Perhaps I should have a better opportunity to read than I should with cousin Samuel."

"Of course you would. For the very matter you may be required to put into type may be as interesting and profitable as anything you could find in a book. All that you read in books went through the printer's hand first."

"I had not thought of that before. I think I should like the business better than almost anything I know of. How long will it take to learn the trade?"

"It will take some time," answered Mr Franklin. "You are now twelve years of age, and you can certainly acquire the best knowledge of the business by the time you are twenty-one years old."

"That is a long time," said Benjamin; "but I shall do what you think best."

"I want *you* should think it is best, too," said his father. "If you have no inclination to be a printer, I do not wish to have you undertake it, I have no confidence that you will succeed in any business for which you have no taste."

"Well, I think better of the business now than I do of

any other," replied Benjamin, "and I should like to try it."

"I will speak with James about it," said his father, "and see what arrangements can be made. The prospects of the business are not very flattering at present, but I think they will be better by and by."

Mr Franklin lost no time in consulting his son James, who favoured the plan without any reserve. He proposed to take Benjamin as an apprentice, to serve until he was twenty-one years of age, having only his board and clothes until the last year, when he would receive journeyman's wages. This was a good opportunity on the whole, for printing was in its infancy in America at that time. It is probable that not more than six or eight persons had been in the business in Boston before James Franklin commenced, in the year 1717. The demand for printing must have been very small indeed.

When Mr Franklin first made known to Benjamin the conditions on which James would receive him into the printing-office, and that he would be expected to sign the indenture, and leave his father's roof for such a boarding-place as his brother might provide, he hesitated about taking the step. He stated his objections frankly and fully to his father, who removed them without much difficulty, so that the writings were drawn up, and Benjamin placed his signature to them and the compact was completed.

He had not laboured long at the business before he was quite fascinated with it. He liked it better even than he expected. He exhibited, too, a good degree of tact for it,

and his progress in learning the art was rapid. His brother was highly gratified with his close attention to his business, and commended him for the use he made of his leisure moments in reading. He was introduced now to another class of acquaintances, so that his opportunities for getting books to read were more favourable. The printing-office was frequented by booksellers' apprentices, whose employers had printing done in the office. Through them Benjamin was made acquainted with the limited stock of books the market afforded.

"I will lend you that book to-night," said one of these apprentices to him, "if you will return it clean in the morning," alluding to a certain volume which Benjamin was looking over in the book-store.

"I should be glad to read it," answered Benjamin; "I think I can read it through before I go to bed, and so return it in the morning when I go to the office."

"You won't have much time left for sleep, if you read that book through before you go to bed," said the apprentice.

"Perhaps not; but I can afford to make a short night's rest of it if I can have the reading of this book. I shall not mind that, and I can return it without a blemish."

"The book is for sale," continued the apprentice, "and we might have a call for it to-morrow, or I would let you keep it longer. If you do not read it all to-night, and we do not sell it to-morrow, you can take it home with you again to-morrow night. I frequently read a volume through, a little at a time, before we have a chance to sell it."

"You may be sure of having this in the morning, safe



and sound," said Benjamin, as he left the store, thanking his friend for the kind favour.

He went home, and sat up most of the night to read the book, being more deeply interested in its contents than he was in pleasant dreams. A short nap, after the volume was finished, was all that time could afford him ; and the bookseller got his book, and the printing-office its apprentice, in good season.

This was but a single instance of the favours he received in this way from his new acquaintances in the book business. Many nights he stole from sleep, that he might read volumes which he must return in the morning. In this way his mind was much improved, so that he began to be noticed in the office as a boy of great promise. One day Mr Matthew Adams, a merchant of rank and influence, who had been attracted by Benjamin's appearance, said to him, "Do you find time to read any, with all the work you have to perform?"

"Yes, sir," replied Benjamin ; "I read in the evenings, and occasionally find a little time during the day."

"It is an excellent plan for boys to improve their mind," said Mr Adams ; "you will never regret spending your time in this way. I should be glad to shew you my library, and to lend you any books you may be interested in to read."

"That is what I should like," said Benjamin, evidently delighted with this unexpected offer ; "I find it difficult to get all the books I want."

"It would afford me great pleasure to assist you what



little I can in this respect," repeated Mr Adams. "Boys who are not privileged to go to school need such help, and I am glad to see that you are disposed to accept of it."

Benjamin thanked him for his kindness, and assured him that he should embrace the first opportunity to call at his house. He redeemed his promise at his earliest convenience, and Mr Adams received him with genuine cordiality. He shewed him his library, and allowed him to select any book he preferred to carry home, and invited him to come as often as he pleased for others. This was a brimful cup of kindness to Benjamin, and the reader may be sure that he thought highly of Mr Adams. Nor was he backward in availing himself of the privilege offered, but went often to gratify his thirst for knowledge.

The habit of reading which Benjamin had thus early formed, served to make him punctual. In order to command the more time, he was promptly at his work, and efficiently discharged every duty. He was seldom, if ever caught idle, and this well-formed habit of punctuality made him very reliable in the printing-office. His brother knew that he would be there at such a time, and that he would remain just so many hours. This fact won his confidence, as it does the confidence of every one. There is no quality that does more to gain a good name for an individual, and inspire the confidence of his fellow-men, than this one of punctuality. It is so generally found in company with other excellent traits of character, that it seems to be taken for granted usually, that the punctual person is worthy in other respects.

## CHAPTER VII.

## FIRST LITERARY ENTERPRISE.

“WHAT have you there?” inquired James, one day, looking over Benjamin’s shoulder at some composition which he held in his hand. “Ay! Poetry, is it? Then you are a poet, are you? Let me read it.”

Benjamin rather hesitated to exhibit the first attempts of his muse to fly, but James was determined to read it, and so he gave it up to him, saying, “I was only seeing what I could do.”

The fact was, Benjamin had been reading poetry, and having a little of its spirit in his own nature, he was tempted to try his ability at writing some.

“That is really good,” said James, after he had read it; “not quite equal to Virgil or Homer, but very good for a printer-boy to write. Have you any other pieces?”

“Two or three more,” answered Benjamin, somewhat encouraged by his brother’s commendation; “but they are not worth reading.”

“Produce them,” said James, “and I will tell you what they are worth.” Whereupon Benjamin took two or three more from his pockets, which James read with evident satisfaction.

“I tell you what it is, Benjamin,” said James after having read them all, “you can write something worth printing if you try; and if you will undertake it, you may print and sell

a sheet in the streets. I have no doubt that it would sell well."

"I will see what I can do," replied Benjamin, "though I suspect my poetry won't read very well in print."

Benjamin was not long in producing two street ballads, better, perhaps, than anything he had written before, but still susceptible of very great improvement. One was entitled, "The Lighthouse Tragedy," and was founded on the shipwreck of Captain Worthilake and his two daughters. The other was a sailor's song, on the capture of the famous "Teach," or Bluebeard," the pirate. James read them with approbation.

"Now," said he, "you shall put them into type, and sell them about the town, if you are willing. I have no doubt that a good number of them may be disposed of."

"How many copies of them would you print?" inquired Benjamin.

"We can print a few to begin with, and let the type remain standing until we see how they go. Then we shall run no risk."

"Shall I do it immediately?"

"As soon as you can," answered James. "The quicker the better."

Benjamin was not long in printing the two ballads, and having them ready for sale. Under the direction of his brother, he went forth, in due time, to offer them about the town. He met with very good success, particularly in the sale of the first, "The Lighthouse Tragedy." That commemorated an event of recent occurrence, and which ex-

cited much public feeling and sympathy at the time, so that people were quite prepared to purchase. It sold even beyond his expectations, and his success inflated his vanity somewhat. It caused him to believe, almost, that he was a genuine poet, and that distinction and a fortune were before him. If he had not been confronted by his father on the subject, it is possible that the speculation might have proved a serious injury to him. But his father learned of his enterprise, and called him to an account.

"I am ashamed to see you engaged in such a business, Benjamin," said he.

"Why so, father?"

"Because it is not an honourable business. You are not a poet, and can write nothing worthy of being printed."

"James approved of the pieces," said Benjamin, "and proposed that I should print and sell them.

"James is not a judge of poetry," replied his father. "It is wretched stuff, and I am ashamed that you are known as the author. Look here, let me shew you wherein it is defective;" and here Mr Franklin began to read it over aloud, and to criticise it. He was a man of sound sense, and competent to expose the faults of such a composition. He proceeded with his criticisms, without sparing the young author's feelings at all, until Benjamin himself began to be sorry that he had undertaken the enterprise.

"There, I want you should promise me," said his father, "that you will never deal in such wares again, and that you will stick to your business of setting up type."

"Perhaps I may improve by practice," said Benjamin,

“so that I may yet be able to write something worthy of being read. You couldn’t expect me to write very well at first.”

“But you are not a poet,” continued Mr Franklin. “It is not in you, and even if it was, I should not advise you to write it; for poets are generally beggars,—poor, shiftless members of society.

“That is news to me,” responded Benjamin. “How does it happen, then, that some of their works are so popular?”

“Because a true poet can write something worthy of being read, while a mere verse-maker, like yourself, writes only doggerel that is not worth the paper on which it is printed. Now I advise you to let verse-making alone, and attend closely to your business, both for your own sake and your brother’s.”

Mr Franklin was rather severe upon Benjamin, although what he said of his verses was true. Still, it was a commendable effort in the boy to try to improve his mind. Some of the best poets who had lived, wrote mere doggerel when they began. Many of our best prose-writers, too were exceedingly faulty writers at first. It is a noble effort of a boy to try to put his thoughts into writing. If he does not succeed in the first instance, by patience, energy, and perseverance, he may triumph at last. Benjamin might not have acted wisely in selling his verses about town, but his brother, so much older and more experienced than himself, should bear the censure of that, since it was done by his direction.

The decided opposition that Mr Franklin shewed to verse-

making, dissipated the air-castle that his youthful imagination had built in consequence of the rapid sale of his literary wares. He went back to the office and his work quite crest-fallen.

“What has happened now?” inquired James, noticing that Benjamin looked somewhat less smiling.

“Father doesn’t think much of my printing and selling verses of my own,” replied Benjamin.

“How is that?” said James. “Does he dislike your pieces?”

“Yes; and he will not allow that they have any merit. He read them over in his way, and counted faults enough to shew that there is very little poetry in me. A beggar and a poet mean the same thing to him.”

“He ought to remember that you are young,” answered James, “and may improve wonderfully in future. You can’t expect to write either prose or poetry well without beginning and trying.”

“I should judge from father’s talk that all the trying in the world can do nothing for me,” added Benjamin, rather seriously.

Perhaps it was a good thing for Benjamin to meet with this obstacle in his path to success. According to his own confession, his vanity was inflated by the sale of his ballads, and he might have been puffed up, to his future injury, had not his father thus unceremoniously taken the wind out of his sails. There was little danger now, however. After such a severe handling, he was not likely to overrate his poetical talents. It had the effect also to turn his attention



to prose writing, which is more substantial than poetry, and in this he became distinguished, as we shall see hereafter.

The practice of writing down one's thoughts, called in our schools "composition," is excellent, and ought not to be so generally neglected by the young as it is. It proved a valuable exercise to Benjamin, even before he became renowned in the service of his country. In several instances, while he was yet a youth, it enabled him to secure business, when otherwise he might have been in extreme want. It gave him the ability to conduct his brother's paper when only sixteen years of age, at a time when the government of the Province incarcerated James, so that the paper would have been crushed but for the ability of Benjamin. When he first commenced business in Philadelphia, also, it enabled him to produce articles for the "Pennsylvania Gazette," which attracted general notice, and opened the way for his becoming both proprietor and editor of the same. And a little later he was able to write a pamphlet on the "*Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency*," proposing a measure that was carried through the legislature, because the opponents of it had no writer in their ranks competent to answer it. These are only a few examples of the many advantages he derived from early training himself to write, even before he had passed the dew of his youth. In age he referred to this practice of his boyhood with much pleasure, and regarded it as one of the fortunate exercises that contributed to his eminent success.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE DISPUTE.

BENJAMIN was intimate, at this time, with a youth by the name of John Collins. He was intelligent, sprightly, and fond of books, so that he was a very agreeable companion. They differed somewhat in their opinions upon various subjects, and frequently found themselves engaged in earnest disputation. When other boys were accustomed to spend their time in foolish talking and jesting, Benjamin and John were warmly discussing some question of importance, well suited to improve the mind. One day their conversation related to the education of the sexes.

“It would be a waste of money,” said John, “to attempt to educate girls as thoroughly as boys are educated; for the female sex are inferior to the male in intellectual endowment.”

“Pshaw!” exclaimed Benjamin; “you know better than that. The girls are not so simple as you think they are. I believe that women are not a whit inferior to men in their mental qualities.”

“I should like to know where you discovered the evidence of it,” replied John. “There is no proof of it in the works they have written.”

“That may be true, and still they stand upon an equality in respect to intellect. For not half so much is done to educate them as there is to educate the male sex. How

can you tell whether they are mentally inferior or not, until they are permitted to enjoy equal advantages ? ”

“ As we tell many other things,” answered John. “ Women do not need so high mental endowments as men, since they are not required to lead off in the different branches of business, or to prosecute the sciences. I can see no wisdom in bestowing talents upon them which they never use, and it is often said that ‘ nothing is made in vain.’ ”

“ Well, I must go,” said Benjamin, “ but I think you have a weak cause to defend. If I had the time I could make out a case.”

“ A poor one, I guess,” quickly added John. “ We will see, the next time we meet, who can make out a case.”

“ It will be some time before we meet again,” responded Benjamin, “ and our ardour will be cooled before that time, I am thinking. But it will do us no harm to discuss the subject.”

“ If we keep our temper,” said John, tacking his sentence to the last word of Benjamin’s reply. And so saying they parted.

After Benjamin had revolved the subject still more in his mind, he became anxious to commit his argument to writing. Accordingly, with pen and paper in hand, he sat down to frame the best argument he could in favour of educating the female sex. He wrote it in the form of a letter, addressed to his friend Collins, and, after having completed, he copied it in a fair hand, and sent it to him. This brought back a long reply which made it necessary for Benjamin to pen an answer. In this way the correspondence continued, until

several letters had passed between them, and each one had gained the victory in his own estimation.

One day Benjamin's father met with these letters accidentally, and he read them over, and was somewhat impressed with their character.

"What are these, Benjamin," he inquired, at the same time holding up the letters.

Benjamin smiled, and rather hesitated to reply.

"So it seems you have been engaged in a controversy with John," continued Mr Franklin. "You have both done very well, though I think there is some chance of improvement yet."

"Have you read them all?" inquired Benjamin.

"I have, and must say that, in some respects, John has the advantage of you."

"In what has he the advantage?" asked Benjamin, with some anxiety.

"Well, John writes in a more finished style than you do," answered Mr Franklin. "His expressions are more elegant, and there is more method and perspicuity in his composition."

"I rather think you are prejudiced," said Benjamin, with a smile.

"I rather think not," answered his father. "You have the advantage of John in correct spelling, and in pointing your sentences, which is the consequence of working in the printing-office. But I can convince you that less method and clearness characterize your letters than his."

“I am ready to be convinced,” added Benjamin. “I hardly expect I have attained perfection in writing yet.”

His father then proceeded to read from the letters of each, with the design of shewing that John’s writing was more perspicuous, and that there was more method in his argument. Nor was it a very difficult task.

“I am convinced,” said Benjamin, before his father had read all he intended to read. “I can make improvement in those points without much trouble. There is certainly a good chance for it.”

“That is what I want you to see,” rejoined his father. “I am really pleased with your letters, for they shew me that you have talents to improve. My only object in calling your attention to these defects is to aid you in cultivating your mental powers.”

This kind, paternal criticism was a very happy thing for Benjamin. It had the effect to make him more careful in his compositions, and to beget within him both a desire and resolve to improve. Not long after, he met with an old volume of the *Spectator*, on a bookstall ; and knowing that it would be a good model by which to form the style, he determined to purchase it. He bought it at a low price, and began to study it with reference to improving the style of his composition. The method which he adopted to discipline himself, by the aid of this work, is proof of his patience, perseverance, and desire to excel. In the first place, he read it over and over, until he became very well acquainted with its contents. Then he took some of the papers it contained, and made short hints of the sentiments of each sen-

tence, and laid them by for a few days ; and then, without referring to the book, he proceeded to put those thoughts into sentences, and thus went through each paper—a long and laborious work. When he had completed a paper in this way, he carefully compared his *Spectator* with the original, and was able thereby to discover and correct many errors in his style. He found that he was very deficient in the command of language.

“ If you had not discouraged me in writing poetry,” said he to his father, “ I should have found it of much service now.”

“ How so ? ” inquired Mr Franklin.

“ If I had continued to write poetry, I should have been obliged to select words that would rhyme, and this would have made me familiar with a larger number of words, and the choicest ones, too. I am greatly troubled now to find words to express my thoughts.”

“ I should have had no objections to your writing poetry with such an object in view ; but to print and sell it about town was carrying the thing a little too far,” replied Mr Franklin. “ It is not too late to begin now. I rather think you have discovered an important defect in your writing. John evidently has a better command of language than you have, hence his style is more polished. But you are at work, now, in the right way to improve. Perseverance will accomplish the thing.”

“ I am going to do this,” said Benjamin ; “ I shall take some of the tales in the book and put them into verse, and then, after a while, change them back again.”

“That will be a good exercise,” answered his father, much pleased with his son’s desire to improve. “If your patience holds out, you will be amply rewarded, in the end, for all your labour.”

This last purpose, Benjamin executed with much zeal, and thus divided his time between putting tales into poetry, and then turning them into prose. He also jumbled his collection of hints into confusion, and so let them lie for some weeks, when he would again reduce them to order, and write out the sentences to the end of the subject.

For a printer-boy to accomplish so much, when he must work through the day in the office, seemed hardly possible. But, at this period, Benjamin allowed no time to be wasted. He always kept a book by him in the office, and every spare moment was employed over its pages. In the morning, before he went to work, he found some time for reading and study. He was an early riser, not, perhaps, because he had no inclination to lie in bed, but because he had more to improve his mind. He gained time enough in the morning, by this early rising, to acquire more knowledge than some youths and young men do by constantly going to school. In the evening, he found still more time for mental improvement, extending his studies often far into the night. It was his opinion that people generally consume more time than is necessary in sleep, and one of his maxims, penned in early manhood, was founded on that opinion. The maxim is, “The sleeping fox catches no poultry.”

It is not strange that a boy who subjected himself to such close discipline for a series of years should write some of



he best maxims upon this subject when he became a man. Take the following, in addition to those cited in a former chapter :—

“ There are no gains without pains ; then help hands, for I have no lands.”

“ Industry pays debts, while despair increaseth them.”

“ Never leave that till to-morrow which you can do to-day.”

“ Leisure is time for doing something useful.”

“ A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things.”

“ Fly pleasures, and they will follow you. The diligent spinner has a large shift, and, now I have a sheep and a cow, every one bids me good-morrow.”

“ Be ashamed to catch yourself idle.”

“ Handle your tools without mittens ; remember that the cat in gloves catches no mice.”

“ There is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed : but stick to it steadily, and you will see great effects, for constant dropping wears away stones ; and by diligence and patience the mouse ate in two the cable ; and little strokes fell great oaks.”

“ Early to bed, and early to rise,  
Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.”

Here is the genuine gold of thought,—whole volumes of counsel worked down into single flashing lines of truth,—just such utterances as we might expect from the lips of one who was early taught to walk in the ways of wisdom. All along in the future of Benjamin's life, we shall see these

maxims illustrated, proving that they are living and bright realities.

It must appear quite evident to the reader by this time, that Benjamin derived much benefit from his conversation with John Collins, upon a useful topic. A large majority of boys of their age, spend their leisure moments in vain and useless talking. They think not of self-improvement, and scarcely desire to be benefited in this way. The most unmeaning and thoughtless words escape from their lips, and a sound, sensible, valuable conversation, they seldom, if ever, attempt. What an excellent example is that of young Franklin and Collins, discussing a question of importance, instead of wasting their breath in meaningless chatter! It stimulated the former to consult the best models of style in composition, and was the real occasion of his adopting a most critical and thorough plan of self-culture. All this the consequence of conversing properly, instead of spending leisure moments in boyish antics, or uttering nonsense.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE NEWSPAPER.

On the seventeenth day of January, 1721, James Franklin began to issue a newspaper, called "THE NEW ENGLAND COURANT." It was the third one at the time in the whole country.

When he proposed to start the third paper in America,

some of his friends thought it was a wild project, and endeavoured to dissuade him from it. They saw nothing but ruin before him, and used every persuasion to lead him to abandon the enterprise. They thought that two newspapers, such as would now excite a smile by their inferior size, were quite enough for the country.

James however decided to issue his paper, notwithstanding the advice of some of his friends to the contrary, and he thus opened the subject to Benjamin:—

“I have resolved to issue a paper, and it will require our united exertions to make it go. No doubt I shall meet with opposition, and perhaps shall fail in the attempt, but I have determined to fail *trying*.”

“What particular service can I render?” inquired Benjamin.

“Aside from your usual work of type-setting, you are qualified to look after the composition and spelling of the articles in each number, and a part of your work shall be to deliver the paper to subscribers from week to week.”

“And be collector, too, I suppose,” added Benjamin, rather pleased with the idea of issuing a newspaper from the office.

“As you like about that,” answered his brother, “though it may be convenient, often, to have you render such a service.”

“I suppose you don’t mean to make me editor also?” he added, rather jestingly; probably not dreaming that he should ever conduct the publication.

“Not at present,” was his brother’s reply. “Printer,

news-carrier, and collector, will be as much honour as you can properly bear at once ;” and he had as little idea of the part Benjamin would play in the work as the boy had himself.

Accordingly the paper was issued at the appointed time, creating quite a stir in the community, and provoking remarks *pro* and *con* concerning its appearance, character, and prospects. Agreeably to the arrangement, Benjamin delivered the numbers to subscribers.

Among the friends of James Franklin, and the patrons of his paper, were several men who possessed considerable talent for writing, and they were accustomed to assemble at the printing-office, and discuss questions connected with the circulation of the paper. Benjamin’s ears were usually open to their conversation,—and he heard the merits of different articles set forth, and learned that certain ones were quite popular, and elicited favourable remarks from readers generally. This excited his ambition, and he earnestly desired to try his own ability in writing for the paper. He feared, however, that his composition would not be regarded favourably, if it were known who was the author ; so he hit upon this expedient. He resolved to write an anonymous article, in his very best style, and get it into his brother’s hand so as not to awaken his suspicion. Accordingly, the article was prepared, and at night it was slipped under the printing-office door, where James found it in the morning. As usual, several of his writers came in about their usual time, and Benjamin had the happiness of hearing the following discussion :—

"Here is a good article, that I found under the door this morning," said James, at the same time holding it up.

"Who is the author of it?" inquired one.

"It is anonymous," replied James, "and I have not the least idea who wrote it."

"What is the subject?" asked another; and the subject was announced.

"Let us hear it read," proposed a third. "You read it aloud to us, James." So James proceeded to read the article aloud, while all listened with deep interest. All the while Benjamin was busily employed at his work, though his ears were never more willing to hear. You may be sure that he felt rather queerly while his composition was undergoing this test, and a close observer might have observed a sly, comical twinkle of his eye. The reading went on without one of the company dreaming that the author stood at their elbow.

"Capital!" exclaimed one, as the last line was read. "Who can the author be?"

"As a general thing," said James, "I shall not insert articles from persons unknown to me, but this is so good that I shall publish it."

"By all means," said one of the company. "We shall soon find out the author; it is a difficult matter to keep such things secret for a long time."

"The author is evidently a person of ability," added another; "every sentence in that article is charged with thought. I should judge that he wanted only culture to make him a writer of the first class."

“Publishing the article will be as likely as anything to bring out the author,” said James.

It was decided to print the article, all having approved of the same, much to the satisfaction of Benjamin, who awaited the decision with some anxiety. Now he scarcely knew how to act in regard to the piece, whether to father it at once, or still conceal its parentage. On the whole, however, he decided to withhold its authorship for the present, and try his hand again in the same way. Much encouraged by the success of his first effort, Benjamin was prepared to produce even a better article on the second trial, which was discussed and approved in the same way as the first. Thus he wrote, and put under the door at night, a number of articles, all of which were pronounced good by James and his friends. It was a time of much interest and excitement to Benjamin, since he was the “unknown character” so much extolled by the patrons of the “*Courant*.” To hear his own articles remarked upon and praised, when no one dreamed that a boy like himself could be the author, was well suited to stir up his feelings, if not to inflate his vanity. Many persons in like circumstances would be allured into indiscretions and improprieties. But Benjamin wisely kept his own counsel.

There is no doubt that this was one of the incidents of Benjamin’s boyhood that decided his future eminent career. It was a good thing to bring out his talents as a writer thus early, and it evidently fostered his love of an exercise that was of the first importance in the improvement of his mind. From the time that he wrote the first article which he put under the door of the printing-office, he did not cease to



write more or less for the public eye. The newspaper was a channel of communicating with readers altogether new to him. It was well suited to awaken deep interest in his heart, and to incite him to put forth his best efforts.

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## CHAPTER X.

## THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG.

BENJAMIN was so highly gratified with the favourable remarks he heard about his articles, and especially that different persons, in guessing who the author might be, usually guessed some writer of distinction, that he could keep the secret no longer. He was eager to make the fact known, that the much talked of essays emanated from his own pen; and soon, as the saying is, "let the cat out of the bag."

Having a good opportunity, in reply to some remark of James about "the last article found under the door," he said, "I know who the author is."

"You know?" exclaimed James with surprise. "Why have you not disclosed it before?"

"Because I thought it was not wise. It is not best to tell all we know always."

"But you have heard us discuss this matter over and over, and take measures to discover the author, and yet you have never intimated that you knew anything about it."

"Well, the author did not wish to be known until the

right time came, and that is a good reason for keeping the matter secret, I think."

"Will you tell me who the author is now?" asked James, impatient to obtain the long-sought information.

"Perhaps I will, if you are very anxious to know."

"You know that I am. Who is it?"

"It is Benjamin Franklin."

"What!" exclaimed James, astonished almost beyond measure by the disclosure; "do you mean to say that you wrote those articles?"

"Certainly I do."

"But it is not your handwriting."

"I disguised my hand in order to conceal the authorship."

"What could possibly be your object in doing so?"

"That the articles might be fairly examined. If I had proposed to write an article for your paper, you would have said that I, a printer-boy, could write nothing worthy of print."

Here the conversation dropped, and James appeared to be abstracted in thought. He said but little about the matter to Benjamin, neither commending nor censuring, until his literary friends came in again.

"I have discovered the author of those articles," said James.

"You have? who can it be?" one asked.

"No one that we have ever thought of," answered James.

"Do tell us who it is, and put an end to our anxiety," said one of the number, who could hardly wait for the desired information.

"There he is," replied James, pointing to Benjamin, who was setting up types a little more briskly than usual. The whole company were amazed.

"Can it be?" cried out one. "You are joking."

Now Benjamin had to speak for himself; for they all turned to him with their inquiries, as if they thought there must be some mistake or deception about the matter. But he found little difficulty in convincing them that he was the real author of the pieces; whereupon they commended him in a manner that was rather perilous to one who had the smallest share of pride in his heart.

From that time Benjamin was a favourite with the literary visitors at the office. They shewed him much more attention than they did James, and said so much in his praise, as a youth of unusual promise, that James became jealous and irritable. He was naturally passionate and tyrannical, and this sudden and unexpected exaltation of Benjamin developed his overbearing spirit. He began to find fault seriously and unreasonably with him, and a disposition to oppress him was soon apparent. He went so far as to beat him severely with a rod, on several occasions, reconciling the matter with his conscience by saying that he was master, and Benjamin was his apprentice. His whole conduct towards his younger brother was unjust and cruel, and the latter became restive and discontented under it. He made known his grievances to his father, who censured James for his conduct, and took the part of Benjamin. But the best efforts of his father to reconcile matters proved abortive, because James's manifest opposition was so aroused

against his brother, on account of his sudden rise to comparative distinction. Other causes might have operated to awaken James's hostility, but this was evidently a prominent one.

Benjamin was so dissatisfied with his treatment that he resolved to leave his brother as soon as possible. He was indentured to him, as we have seen, so that it was difficult for him to get away. Being bound to him until he became twenty-one years of age, the law held him firmly there, notwithstanding the injustice he experienced. Still, for the present, he laboured on in the office, and the newspaper continued to be issued.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE ARREST.

"HAVE you heard what they are doing in the Assembly?" asked Benjamin one afternoon, as he entered the office under considerable excitement, addressing his inquiry to James.

"Doing?" answered James; "doing their business, I suppose;"—a reply that did not indicate precisely his knowledge of the legislative doings, since he had heard of the business before them, and was somewhat troubled by it.

"They are certainly going to arrest you for libel, and I heard a gentleman say, in the street, that they would shew you no favour;" and Benjamin made this revelation with

considerable warmth of feeling. The idea of his brother's arrest and imprisonment excited him in no small degree.

On the same day the following order was passed in the General Court:—

IN COUNCIL, January 14, 1722.

“Whereas the paper, called the New England Courant, of this day's date, contains many passages in which the Holy Scriptures are perverted, and the Civil Government, Ministers, and People of this Province highly reflected on,

*Ordered*, That William Tailer, Samuel Sewell, and Penn Townsend, Esqrs., with such as the Honourable House of Representatives shall join, be a committee to consider and report what is proper for the Court to do thereon.”

The House of Representatives concurred, and the committee reported:—

“That James Franklin, the printer and publisher thereof (the Courant), be strictly forbidden by this Court to print or publish the New England Courant, or any other pamphlet or paper of the like nature, except it be first supervised by the Secretary of this Province; and the Justices of his Majesty's Sessions of the Peace for the County of Suffolk, at their next adjournment, be directed to take sufficient bonds of the said Franklin for twelve months' time.”

The result was, that James was arrested and confined four weeks in the “stone gaol,” from which he was released by his voluntary pledge to regard the honour of the Court. Benjamin was arrested also; but was discharged on the ground that he acted as an apprentice, and was obliged to do the bidding of his master.

It appears that at the time there was considerable dissatisfaction in the Province with the British government, under which the people lived. The Courant espoused the cause of the dissatisfied party, and, perhaps unwisely, attacked the government and its officers, together with the ministers of the Gospel, whose sympathies seemed to be with the dominant party. It was a time of considerable excitement, so that a little firebrand thrown into the community was sure to make a great fire. But the immediate cause of his arrest was the appearance of the following article in his paper, which was a slur upon the government for tardiness in fitting out a ship to cruise after a pirate seen off Block Island. The article purported to be written by a correspondent in Newport, R. I., and read thus :—

“We are advised from Boston, that the government of the Massachusetts are fitting out a ship to go after the pirates, to be commanded by Captain Peter Papillon, and *'tis thought he will sail some time this month, wind and weather permitting.*”

This well-pointed censure, in connexion with the many flings and attacks that had preceded it, aroused the General Court to act in their defence without delay.

The club, under whose auspices the Courant was conducted, assembled at the office as soon as they knew the decision of the Court, to consider what should be done.

“It is certain,” said one, “that you cannot continue to issue the paper against the action of the Court.”

“Not in his own name,” suggested another. “It may still be published in the name of another person, and thus the legislative order will be evaded.”



“How will it do to issue it in Benjamin’s name?” inquired James.

“That cannot be done, for he is only an apprentice, as could be very readily proved,” was the reply.

“I can easily meet that difficulty,” answered James, who was usually ready for a shrewd evasion in such a case.

“Pray, tell us how,” asked one of the number, who was disposed to think that the days of the Courant were numbered. “By changing the name?”

“No, I would not change the name. I will return his indenture, with his discharge upon the back of it, and he can shew it in case of necessity. We can understand the matter between us, while he will be his own man whenever any trouble may arise about his apprenticeship.

All agreed that this plan would work well, and it was accordingly adopted.

“Benjamin Franklin, publisher and proprietor,” said one of the club, rising from his seat and patting Benjamin on the shoulder. “What do you think of that, my son? Rather a young fellow to undertake such an enterprize!”

Benjamin was quite unprepared to reply to the merriment of the club on the occasion over his unexpected introduction to an office of which he did not dream in the morning. He was now to appear before the public in quite another relation than that of apprentice,—probably the youngest conductor of a newspaper who ever lived, for he was only sixteen years of age.

Henceforth the paper appeared in the name of Benjamin Franklin, occasioning, by all the circumstances, no little excitement in the town.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE RUNAWAY.

Not long after James was released from prison, a fresh difficulty arose between Benjamin and himself. In the quarrel they seemed to forget that they were brothers, who ought to be united by strong ties of affection. James continued to be passionate and domineering, treating his brother with harshness, sometimes even beating him, notwithstanding he was the nominal publisher and editor of a paper. Benjamin thought he was too old to be treated thus—whipped like a little boy—and the result was that he asserted his freedom.

“I am my own man from this time,” he cried, holding up his indenture which his brother returned to him, as we saw in a former chapter, in order to evade the officers of justice. “These papers make me free, and I shall take advantage of them to leave you.”

“You know that I never gave them up because I relinquished the bargain we had made,” said James. “If you use them to assert your freedom, you will be guilty of a base act.”

“I *shall* so use the papers,” replied Benjamin, defiantly. “I have borne such treatment long enough, and I shall submit no longer.”

“We shall see about that,” continued James. “Father will have a word to say about it, you will find.”

“Yes, and he will probably say that you have abused me,

and that you ought to control your temper and treat me better," responded Benjamin. "He always has decided in my favour, and I have no fears about his decision now."

It was not fair in Benjamin to take this advantage of his brother, and he knew it, but his resentment triumphed over his regard for right at the time. James returned his indenture only that he might be able to publish the paper unmolested. It was a deceitful arrangement in the first place, and Benjamin's use of the papers to assert his liberty was no more unfair and sinful than was James's device to make him the proprietor of the paper, and thus evade the law. James was paid in his own coin. He laid a plan to cheat the government, and he got cheated himself. He was snared in the work of his own hands. This, however, did not justify Benjamin in his course, as he afterwards saw, and frankly confessed.

Benjamin persisted in asserting his freedom, and James appealed to his father. After the latter had examined the affair, all the while knowing that James was passionate and overbearing, he decided against Benjamin. The advantage which the latter took of James to gain his freedom probably influenced Mr Franklin to decide in favour of the former. This was unexpected by Benjamin, and was not received with a very good grace. It did not change his determination, however, and he was still resolved to be free. He refused to labour any more for his brother, and went forth to look for employment elsewhere. There were a number of other printers in the town, to whom he applied for work; but he found, to his surprise, that his brother had antici-

pated him, and been round to persuade them not to hire him.

"He has violated a solemn contract," said he to one, "and he will violate any contract he will make with you. Besides, if you refuse to hire him, he will be obliged to return and labour for me."

The printers all sympathised with James, and accordingly refused to give Benjamin work. He found himself in a very unpleasant situation on that account, without the means of earning his bread, and, in one sense, without a home, since he had disregarded his father's counsel in not returning to his brother. He learned, also, that some good people considered him no better than an infidel.

"Nothing less than the loosest sceptic," said one good man. "He hates the truth with all his heart, as much that he writes plainly shews. His influence in the community is very bad, and it is growing worse and worse."

Good people thus misjudged Benjamin. Some went so far as to call him an "atheist." His attacks upon the clergy and government, in his paper, created so much excitement, that he was understood to mean worse than he did.

All these things served to wean Benjamin from Boston, and he decided on seeking his fortune elsewhere. He embraced the first opportunity to confer with his old friend John Collins, on the subject.

"John, I am going to New York," he said.

"To New York?" exclaimed John. "What has started you off there?"

"Enough to start anybody. I have been ill-used long enough, and can get no new work in Boston, so I must go or starve."

"How so?" inquired John, "I don't understand you?"

"The case is just this," said Benjamin. "James has treated me very harshly for a long time, and I have submitted. But I had a good opportunity to make myself free, and I have improved it. When James was put into prison for libel, he returned me my indenture with a discharge written on the back, to shew in case the government interfered with my publishing the paper. He did not mean, of course, that I should be released from my obligations to him; but he has treated me so unmercifully, lately, that I have taken advantage of the paper, and broken my engagement with him."

"You have got round him this time, certainly," said John. "How does he feel about it?"

"He has appealed to father, and father has decided against me, and advised me to go back; but I am not at all disposed to do it."

"I would work in some other printing-office," added John, "before I would go to New York."

"But I cannot get work anywhere else. I have been to every office, and they all refuse to employ me because my brother went to them before me, and told his story, and made them promise not to hire me."

"I suppose he thought by so doing to compel you to come back to him," suggested John.

“I suppose so; but he will find himself mistaken. I shall go to New York as soon as I can get away.”

“What does your father say about your going off so far?”

“I have said nothing to him about it, and do not intend to do so. He would stop my going at once if he knew it.”

“How can you get away without letting him know it?”

“That remains to be seen,” answered Benjamin. “I shall want some of your help about it.”

“I am at your service,” said John, “though it seems very little that I can do to hasten your flight;” but he had hardly uttered the last sentence before a new thought flashed upon his mind, and he added, with great earnestness, “Yes, I can, too; I have seen the captain of that New York sloop in the harbour, and I can make a bargain with him to take you there.”

“But he will want to know who I am, and will refuse to take me when he finds that I am a runaway.”

“I can manage that, if you will leave it to me,” answered John. “I will pledge you that he will never know that your name is Franklin.”

“I agree, then, to commit myself to your care. See that you manage the affair well, for to New York I must go.”

They parted; and John hurried away to see the aforesaid captain.

After a long conversation with Collins, the captain consented to carry Benjamin to New York. He arranged to receive him clandestinely, and to have him on his way before any suspicion of his plans was awakened.



John hastened to inform Benjamin of the success of his enterprise, and to congratulate him upon his fair prospects of getting away.

“Money is the next thing,” said Benjamin. “I can’t go without money. I must sell my books for something, though I dislike to part with them.”

“They will sell quick enough,” said John, “and will bring you a very pretty sum to start with.”

Benjamin lost no time in disposing of his little library for what it would bring, and he managed to get his clothes together without exciting suspicion; and, with the assistance of John, he got on board privately, just before the vessel sailed.

“Good luck to you, Ben,” said John, as they shook hands.

“Good by,” answered Benjamin, with a heavy heart, just beginning to feel that he was going away from home. “See that you tell no tales out of school.”

Thus they parted; and the sloop sailed for New York, where she arrived in three days. Benjamin did not know a person in that city, nor had he a single letter of recommendation to any one, and the money in his pocket was but a trifle. It was in October, 1723, that he arrived in New York. Think of a lad seventeen years of age running away from home, entering a large city without a solitary acquaintance, and possessing scarcely money enough to pay for a week’s board! He must have carried some sad, lonely feelings in his heart along those strange streets, and possibly his conscience sorely upbraided him for his course.

Benjamin behaved very unwisely and wickedly in this affair. Although his brother was severely harsh in his treatment of him, it was not sufficient reason for his running away from home, and he was thoroughly convinced of this at an early day. Such an act is one of the most flagrant sins that a youth can commit, although circumstances may render it less guilty in some cases than in others. In the case of Benjamin, the unkind treatment which he received at the hand of his brother mitigated his sin, though it by no means excused it.

There is not a more unpleasant occurrence in the whole life of Benjamin Franklin than this quarrel with his brother. We charge the difficulty mainly upon James, of course ; but this does not blot out the unpleasantness of the affair. A quarrel between brothers is always painful in the extreme, and is discreditable to all parties concerned.

At this crisis of Benjamin's life, it seemed as if he was on the highway to ruin. There is scarcely one similar case in ten, where the runaway escapes the vortex of degradation. Benjamin would not have been an exception, but for his early religious culture and the grace of God.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### ANOTHER TRIP AND ITS TRIALS.

ON arriving at New York, Benjamin applied to a well-known printer, Mr William Bradford, for work.

"Where are you from?" he inquired.

"From Boston," was Benjamin's reply.

"Are you used to the printing business?"

"Yes, that is my trade. I have worked at it several years."

"I am sorry I cannot employ you. Just now my business is small, and I have all the help I need."

"What do you think of the prospect of getting work at some other office in the town?" inquired Benjamin.

"Not very flattering, I am sorry to say. Dull times, my son, very dull indeed. But I can tell you where you can find employment, I think. My son carries on the printing business in Philadelphia, and one of his men died the other day. I think he would be glad to employ you."

"How far is it to Philadelphia?"

"It is a hundred miles," replied Mr Bradford; "a much shorter distance than you have already travelled."

Benjamin looked somewhat disappointed when he found that Philadelphia was a hundred miles farther; still, he was after work, and he was determined to find it; so he made inquiries about the mode of conveyance, and left Mr Bradford, thanking him for his kindness. He immediately made arrangements to proceed to Philadelphia. He was less disheartened, probably, on account of the assurance of Mr Bradford that his son would employ him. If he could procure work by travelling a hundred miles more, he would cheerfully do it, although a journey of a hundred miles then was about equal to one thousand now.

At the appointed time Benjamin went aboard, and the

boat started. She had not proceeded far when a squall struck her, tore her rotten sails to pieces, and drove her upon an island. Before this, however, a drunken Dutchman, who was also a passenger, fell overboard, and would have lost his life but for the timely assistance of our printer-boy. Springing to the side of the boat, Benjamin reached over and seized him by the hair of his head as he rose, and drew him on board.

"He may thank you for saving his life," exclaimed one of the boatmen.

"He is too drunk for that," answered Benjamin. "It will sober him a little, however, I think.

The Dutchman mumbled over something, and pulling a book out of his pocket, asked Benjamin to dry it for him, which he promised to do. Soon the poor, miserable fellow was fast asleep, in spite of the wet and danger, and Benjamin examined the drenched volume, which proved to be Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, in Dutch, a favourite book of his a few years before. It was a very good companion for even a drunken Dutchman to have; but Benjamin could not but think that its contents were not so familiar to the unfortunate possessor as the bottle.

On approaching Long Island they found that there was no place to land, and the beach was very stony; so "they dropped anchor, and swung out their cable towards the shore." Some men came down to the shore and hallooed to them, and they returned the shout. Seeing some small boats lying along the shore, they cried out as loudly as possible, "A boat! a boat!" and made signs to them to come to their

assistance ; but the wind was so boisterous that neither party could understand the other.

After several fruitless attempts on both sides to be heard, and night coming on, the men on the shore went home, and left Benjamin and the boatmen to their perils.

The cold dreary night wore away slowly, and the wind continued to howl, and the breakers to dash and roar, until after the dawn of the following morning. Benjamin was never more rejoiced to see daylight appear than he was, after that dismal and perilous night. It was the more pleasant to him, because the wind began to abate, and there was a fairer prospect of reaching their place of destination. As soon as the tumult of the wind and waves had subsided, they weighed anchor, and steered for Amboy, where they arrived just before night.

In the evening Benjamin found himself feverish, having taken a severe cold by the exposure of the previous night. With a hot head and a heavy heart he retired to rest, first, however, drinking largely of cold water, because he had somewhere read that cold water was good for fever. This was one of the advantages he derived from his early habit of reading. But for his taste for reading, which led him to spend his leisure moments in poring over books, he might never have known this important fact, which perhaps saved him a fit of sickness. Availing himself of this knowledge, he drank freely of water before he retired, and the consequence was, that he perspired freely during most of the night, and arose the next morning comparatively well.

In the morning he was ready for another start on his

journey. Burlington was fifty miles from Amboy, and there was no public conveyance, so that he was obliged to go on foot, expecting to find a boat there bound for Philadelphia. It was raining hard, and yet he started upon the journey, and trudged on through the storm and mud, eager to see Burlington. He was thoroughly drenched before he had travelled five miles, and, in this condition, he walked on rapidly till noon, when he came to a "poor inn," and stopped. Being wet and tired, he resolved to remain there until the next day. The innkeeper's suspicions were awakened by Benjamin's appearance, and he questioned him rather closely.

Benjamin saw that he was suspected of being a runaway, and he felt very uncomfortable. He managed, however, to answer all questions without satisfying the curiosity of the family. He ate and slept there, and on the following morning proceeded on his journey, and by night was within eight or ten miles of Burlington. Here he stopped at an inn kept by one Dr Brown, a perambulating doctor. He was a very social and observing man, and soon discovered that Benjamin was a youth of unusual intelligence for one of his age. He conversed with him freely about Boston and other places, and gave a particular account of some foreign countries which he had visited. In this way he made Benjamin's brief stay with him very pleasant, and they became friends for life, meeting many times thereafter on friendly terms.

The next morning he reluctantly bade the doctor good-bye, and proceeded to Burlington, where he expected to find



a boat. In the suburbs of the town he bought some gingerbread of an old woman who kept a shop, and walked on, eating it as he went. To his great disappointment, on reaching the wharf, he found the boat had gone, and there would not be another until Tuesday. However, on walking on the quay in the afternoon, he came upon a chance boat which was bound for Philadelphia. He made a bargain with the master of it to convey him there; and after a very stormy passage arrived safe in Philadelphia early on the following morning.

Benjamin on his arrival was very tired and hungry, having eaten nothing since he dined in Burlington, on the day before, and he hastened to a baker's shop which he saw open.

"Have you biscuit?" he inquired, meaning such as he was accustomed to eat in Boston.

"We make nothing of the kind," answered the proprietor.

"You may give me a threepenny loaf, then."

"We have none."

Benjamin began to think that he should have to go hungry still, since he did not know the names or prices of the kinds of bread made in Philadelphia. But in a moment he recovered himself, and said, "Then give me threepenny-worth of any sort."

To his surprise the baker gave him three great large rolls, enough to satisfy half a dozen hungry persons. He looked at it, scarcely knowing at first what he could do with so much, but, as "necessity is the mother of invention," he

soon discovered a way of disposing of it. He put a roll under each arm, and taking a third in his hand he proceeded to eat it, as he continued his walk up the street.

Let the reader stop here, and imagine Benjamin Franklin, the runaway youth, as he made his first appearance in the city of Philadelphia. See him trudging up the street with his worn, dirty clothes (his best suit having been sent round by sea), his pockets stuffed out with shirts and stockings, and a large roll under each arm, and a third in his hand, of which he is eating! A comical appearance certainly! It is not very probable that this runaway Benjamin will ever become "Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of France," or surprise the world by his philosophical discoveries! There is much more probability that he will live in some obscure printing-office, and die, "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung." Who wonders that a young lady, Miss Read, who was standing in the door of her father's residence as Benjamin passed, thought he made a very awkward and ridiculous appearance? She little thought she was taking a bird's-eye view of her future husband, as the youth with the rolls of bread under his arm proved to be. But just then he cared more for bread than he did for her; some years after, the case was reversed, and he cared more for her than he did for bread.

Turning round a corner he continued to walk until he came round to the wharf, where he landed. Being thirsty, he went to the boat for water, where he found a woman and child who came down the river with them on the previous night, waiting to go farther.

"Are you hungry?" he inquired of the child, who looked wistfully at his bread.

"We are both very hungry," answered the woman, speaking for herself and child.

"I have satisfied my hunger," said Benjamin, "and you may have the rest of my bread if you would like it," at the same time passing both rolls to her.

"You are very kind indeed," responded the woman. "I thank you much for it;"—all of which was as good pay for the bread as Benjamin wanted. This was an instance of the generosity for which he was distinguished throughout his whole life.

He then walked up the street again, and found well-dressed people going to church. Joining in the current, notwithstanding his appearance, he went with them into the large Quaker meeting-house that stood near the market. He took his seat, and waited for the service to begin, either not knowing what Quakers did at meeting, or else being ignorant that he was among this sect. As nothing was said, and he was weary and exhausted with the labours and watchings of the previous night, he became drowsy, and soon dropped into a sweet sleep. His nap might have proved a very unfortunate event for him, but for the kindness of a wide-awake Quaker. For he did not wake up when the meeting closed, and the congregation might have dispersed, and the sexton locked him in, without disturbing his slumbers. But the kind-hearted Quaker moved his spirit by giving him a gentle rap on the shoulder. He started up, somewhat surprised that the service was over, and passed

out with the crowd. Soon after, meeting a fine-looking young Quaker, who carried his heart in his face, Benjamin inquired, "Can you tell me where a stranger can get a night's lodging?"

"Here," answered the Quaker, "is a house where they receive strangers" (pointing to the sign of the Three Mariners near which they stood), "but it is not a reputable one; if thee will walk with me I will shew thee a better one."

"I will be obliged to you for doing so," answered Benjamin. "I was never in Philadelphia before, and am not acquainted with one person here."

The Quaker conducted him to Water Street, and shewed him the Crooked Billet,—a house where he might be accommodated. Benjamin thanked him for his kindness, entered the house, and called for dinner and a room. While sitting at the dinner table, his host asked, "Where are you from?"

"I am from Boston."

"Boston!" exclaimed the host, with some surprise. "How long since you left home?"

This question being answered, he continued, "Have you friends in Philadelphia?"

"None at all. I do not know a single person here."

"What did you come here for?"

"I came to get work in a printing-office. I am a printer by trade."

"How old are you?"

"I am seventeen years old, sir," replied Benjamin, just

beginning to perceive that the man suspected him of being a runaway.

“And came all the way from Boston alone?”

“Yes, sir.”

Benjamin closed the conversation as soon as he could conveniently, after perceiving that his appearance had excited suspicions, and went to his room, where he lay down and slept till six o'clock in the evening, when he was called to supper. He went to bed again very early, and was soon locked in the embrace of “nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep.”

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### GETTING WORK.

AFTER a good night's sleep, Benjamin arose and dressed himself as neatly as he could with his old clothes, and repaired to Andrew Bradford's printing-office.

“Ah! then you have arrived,” said an old gentleman, rising to salute him as he entered. “I reached here first.”

Benjamin was surprised to meet the old printer whom he saw in New York, and who had directed him to his son, Andrew Bradford, of Philadelphia. “I did not expect to meet you here,” said he.

“I suppose not. I started off unexpectedly, and came all the way on horseback. But I am glad that you have reached here safely. This is a young man from Boston”

(addressing his son and introducing Benjamin), "after work in a printing-office, and I directed him to you. Franklin is your name, I believe."

"Yes, sir. Benjamin Franklin."

Mr Bradford received him very cordially, and being about to eat breakfast, he said, "Come, it is my breakfast-hour, and you shall be welcome to the table. We can talk this matter over at the table;"—and Benjamin accepted the invitation.

"I told this young man," said the old printer from New York, "that one of your men died a short time since, and you would want a printer to take his place."

"That is true," replied Mr Andrew Bradford. "I did want another hand to take his place, but I hired one only a few days since. I am sorry to disappoint this youth who has come so far for work."

"Is there another printing-office here?" asked Benjamin.

"Yes; a man by the name of Keimer has just commenced the business, and I think he would be glad to employ you."

"I must get work somewhere," added Benjamin, "for I have spent nearly all my money in getting here."

"If he will not employ you," added Mr Bradford, kindly, "you may lodge at my house, and I will give you a little work from time to time until business is better."

"That will be a great favour to me," answered Benjamin, "for which I shall be very thankful;" and he really felt more grateful to Mr Bradford for the offer than his words indicated.

"I will go with you to see Mr Keimer," said old Mr



Bradford from New York. "Perhaps I can be of some service to you in securing a place."

Benjamin began to think he had fallen into very obliging hands ; so he followed their advice, and went with his aged friend to see the newly-established printer. On arriving at the office, they met Mr Keimer, and old Mr Bradford introduced their business by saying, " Neighbour, I have brought to see you a young man of your business ; perhaps you may want such a one."

"That depends on his qualifications," answered Mr Keimer. "How long have you worked at the business?" he inquired, turning to Benjamin.

"Several years, sir."

"Do you understand all parts of it, so that you can go on with it?"

"I think I do ; you can try me and satisfy yourself."

"Take this composing-stick, and let me see whether you are competent or not," said Keimer.

Benjamin proceeded to exhibit his skill at the work, and very soon satisfied Keimer that he had told the truth.

"Very well done," said Keimer. "I will employ you as soon as I have sufficient work to warrant such a step. At present I have nothing for you to do."

Here Benjamin saw the advantage of having attended to his business closely, so as to learn thoroughly the work he was to do. Some boys perform their work in just a passable way, not caring particularly whether it is well done, if they can only "pass muster." But not so with Benjamin. He sought to understand the business to which he attended,

and to do as well as possible the work he undertook. The consequence was, that he was a thorough workman, and in five minutes he was able to satisfy Keimer of the fact. This was greatly in his favour; and such a young man is never long out of business.

Keimer ultimately engaged Franklin, and went to board with Mr Read, the father of the young lady who stood in the door when he passed on the morning of his arrival, with a roll of bread under each arm, and who afterwards became his wife.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### NEWS FROM HOME, AND RETURN.

For some time Benjamin lived contentedly in Philadelphia, striving to forget Boston and old familiar scenes as much as possible. No one at home knew of his whereabouts, except his old friend Collins, who kept the secret well. One day, however, a letter came to his address, and the superscription looked so familiar that Benjamin's hand fairly trembled as he broke the seal. It proved to be from his brother-in-law, Robert Homes, "master of a sloop that traded between Boston and Delaware." He came to Newcastle, it seems, about forty miles from Philadelphia, and hearing of Benjamin's place of residence, he sat down and wrote him a letter, telling him of the deep sorrow into which his depar-

ture had plunged his parents, who still were wholly ignorant of his fate, and exhorting him to return home to his friends, who would welcome him kindly. The letter was a strong appeal to his feelings.

Benjamin sat down and replied to the letter, stating his reasons in full for leaving Boston, giving an account of his present circumstances and prospects, and closing by expressing kind feelings for all the loved ones at home, but declining to return.

Not many days after Benjamin wrote and sent his letter, an unusual scene transpired at the office. He was at work near the window, when, on looking out, he saw a gentleman in uniform approaching.

"That is the Governor," said Keimer.

"He is coming in," said Franklin.

Keimer looked out at the window, and saw that it was so, whereupon he hurried down to the door, not a little excited by the thought of waiting upon the Governor, supposing, of course, that he was coming in to see him.

"Does Benjamin Franklin work for you?" inquired the Governor.

"He does," answered Keimer, both astonished and perplexed by the inquiry. What he could want of him he could not imagine.

"Can I see him?" asked the Governor.

"Certainly; walk in." The Governor and Colonel French, who was with him, were ushered into the presence of Benjamin.

"I am happy to make the acquaintance of a young man

of your abilities," he said to him. "I regret that you did not report yourself to me long ago."

Benjamin was too much astonished at the unexpected interview to be able to reply; and the Governor went on to say that "he called to invite him to an interview at the tavern." Benjamin was more perplexed than ever, and Keimer stared with amazement. But after some hesitation, arising from sudden surprise, Benjamin consented to go with the Governor, and was soon seated with him and Colonel French in a room of the tavern.

"I called to see you," said the Governor, "respecting the printing business in this town. I understand that you are well acquainted with it in all its branches, and, from my knowledge of your abilities, I think you would succeed admirably in setting up the business for yourself. Our printers here are ignorant and inefficient, and we must have more competent men to do the government work."

How the Governor knew so much about his qualifications for the business, Benjamin could not divine. He replied, however, "I have nothing to commence business with, and it will require some capital. My father might assist me if he were disposed; but I have no reason to think that he would."

"I will write to him upon the subject," said the Governor, "and perhaps he may be persuaded. I can shew him the advantages of such an enterprise to yourself and the public, so that he cannot doubt the practicability of the thing."

"There are two printers here already," continued Benjamin; "and a third one would hardly be supported."

"A third one, who understands the business as you do," responded the Governor, "would command the chief business of the town in a short time. I will pledge you all the public printing of the government."

"And I will pledge the same for the government of Delaware," said Colonel French of Newcastle.

"There can be no doubt on this point," continued Governor Keith. "You had better decide to return to Boston by the first vessel, and take a letter from me to your father."

"I will so decide at once, if such is your judgment in the matter," replied Benjamin.

"Then it is understood," added his Excellency, "that you will repair to Boston in the first vessel that sails. In the meantime, you must continue to work for Mr Keimer, keeping the object of this interview a profound secret."

Having made this arrangement, they separated, and Benjamin returned to the printing-office, scarcely knowing how he should evade the anticipated inquisitiveness of Keimer respecting the interview; but he succeeded in keeping the secret. His mind, however, laboured much upon the question, how Governor Keith should know anything about him, a poor obscure printer-boy. It was not until he returned to Boston that this mystery was solved. Then he learned that Keith was present at Newcastle when his brother-in-law received his (Benjamin's) letter, and Captain Homes read it aloud to him.

"How old is he?" asked the Governor.

"Seventeen," replied Captain Homes.

“Only seventeen ! I am surprised that a youth of that age should write so well. He must be an uncommon boy.”

Captain Homes assured him that he was a very competent youth, and possessed abilities that qualified him for almost any place. Here was the secret of Keith's interest in the printer-boy, but of which the latter knew nothing until he met his brother-in-law in Boston.

Before an opportunity offered for Benjamin to go to Boston, Governor Keith frequently sent for him to dine with him, on which occasions he conversed with him in a very friendly and familiar way. It was quite unusual for a boy of seventeen years to become the frequent guest of a Governor, and no wonder he was almost bewildered by the unexpected attention. Some would have become vain and proud in consequence of such attentions ; but Benjamin bore the honours meekly.

About the end of April, 1724, a small vessel offered for Boston. Benjamin made arrangements to go, took leave of Keimer as if going to visit his friends, and, with Keith's letter to his father, sailed. The vessel had a boisterous time at sea, but after a fortnight's voyage she entered Boston harbour. Benjamin had been absent seven months, and his parents had not heard a word from him. His brother-in-law had not returned from Newcastle, nor written to them about his knowledge of Benjamin. The reader may well imagine, then, that he took them all by surprise. His poor mother had laid his absence to heart so much, that it had worn upon her, and his return was to her almost like life from the dead. She was overjoyed, and no lan-



guage could express her delight as she looked into the face of her long-lost Benjamin. His father was not less rejoiced, although he had a different way of shewing it. Indeed, all the family, except his brother James, gave him a most cordial and affectionate welcome. He did not return ragged and penniless, as runaways generally do, but he was clad in a new and handsome suit, carried a watch in his pocket, and had about five pounds sterling, in silver, in his purse. He never looked half so genteel and neat in his life, and certainly never commanded so much money at one time before.

Before his brother James heard of his arrival, Benjamin hastened to the printing-office, and startled him by suddenly standing before him. James stopped his work, saluted him in rather a reserved manner, and, after surveying him from head to foot, turned to his work again. It was rather a cold reception on the whole, but not altogether unexpected to Benjamin. A brother who had driven him away by his harsh treatment could hardly be expected to welcome him back with a warm heart.

Benjamin took the first opportunity to make known to his father the object and circumstances of his visit home, and to hand him the Governor's letter, which he received with manifest surprise, though he evidently doubted whether it was genuine. For several days he entered into no conversation about the matter, as he did not exactly know what to make of it. Just then Captain Homes returned, and Mr Franklin shewed him the letter of Governor Keith, and inquired if he knew the man.

“I have met him,” replied Captain Homes, “and was pleased with his appearance. I think it would be well for Benjamin to follow his advice.”

“He cannot be a man of much discretion,” continued Mr Franklin, “to think of setting up a boy in business who lacks three years of arriving at his majority. The project does not strike me favourably at all.”

“He was much taken with Benjamin’s abilities,” added Captain Homes, “by a letter which I received from him at Newcastle, and which I read to him, as he was present when I received it.”

“His letters may be well enough, for aught I know; but a youth of his age, though his abilities be good, has not sufficient judgment to conduct business for himself. I shall not give my consent to such a wild scheme.”

Mr Franklin replied to Governor Keith’s letter, and thanked him kindly for the patronage he offered his son, but declining to set up a youth in a business of so much importance.

“I am rejoiced,” said he to Benjamin, just before the latter started to go back, “that you have conducted yourself so well as to secure the esteem of Sir William Keith. Your appearance, too, shews that you have been industrious and economical, all of which pleases me very much. I should advise you to go back, and think no more of going into business for yourself until you are of age. By industry, economy, and perseverance, you will be able to command the means of establishing business then. As yet you are too young. I should be glad to have you remain here with

your brother, if he could be reconciled to you ; but as it is, you shall have my approbation and blessing in returning to Philadelphia."

It was during this visit to Boston that he called upon the celebrated Dr Increase Mather, to whose preaching he had been accustomed to listen. The Doctor received him kindly, and introduced him into his library, where they chatted in a familiar way for some time. When Benjamin rose to go out, "Come this way," said the Doctor, "I will shew you a nearer passage out,"—pointing him to a narrow passage, with a beam crossing it overhead. They were still talking, the Doctor following behind, and Benjamin partly turned around toward him.

"*Stoop ! stoop !*" shouted the Doctor.

Benjamin did not understand what he meant, until his head struck against the beam with considerable force.

"There," said the Doctor, laughing, "you are young, and have the world before you ; stoop as you go through it, and you may miss many hard thumps."

Nearly seventy years after, the recipient of this counsel wrote :—

"This advice, thus beaten into my head, has frequently been of use to me ; and I often think of it when I see pride mortified, and misfortunes brought upon people by their carrying their heads too high."

On his return to Philadelphia, Benjamin immediately sought an interview with Governor Keith, and told him the result of his visit home, and gave his father's reasons for declining to assist him.

“But since he will not set you up,” said the Governor, “I will do it myself. Give me an inventory of the things necessary to be had from England, and I will send for them. You shall repay me when you are able; I am resolved to have a good printer here, and I am sure you must succeed.”

This was said with such apparent cordiality that Benjamin did not doubt that he meant just what he affirmed, so he yielded to his suggestion to make out an inventory of necessary articles. In the meantime he went to work for Keimer.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### GOING TO ENGLAND.

At the earliest opportunity, Benjamin presented the Governor with a list of the articles necessary in setting up the printing business.

“And what will be the probable expense of all these?” inquired the Governor.

“About one hundred pounds sterling, as nearly as I can estimate,” he replied.

“But would it not prove an advantage for you to be there yourself, to select the types, and see that everything is good?”

“I suppose it would, though such a thing as going to England is scarcely possible with me.”

“That remains to be seen,” continued Governor Keith. “Another advantage of your being there is, that you could form acquaintances, and establish correspondence in the bookselling and stationery line.”

“That would certainly be an advantage,” replied Benjamin.

“Then get yourself ready to go in the *Annis*,” said the Governor. The *Annis* was a ship that sailed between Philadelphia and London once a-year, and the only one at that time which performed this voyage. Instead of there being scores of vessels sailing between these two ports, as now, there was only this solitary one, going and returning once a-year.

“It is not necessary to prepare immediately,” answered Benjamin, “since it is several months before the *Annis* will sail.”

“True ; I only meant that you should be in readiness when the ship sails. It will be necessary for you still to keep the matter secret while you continue to work for Keimer.”

The time approached for the *Annis* to sail, and Benjamin began to realize the trial of leaving his friends. A new tie now bound him to Philadelphia. A mutual affection existed between Miss Read and himself, and it had ripened into sincere and ardent love. He desired a formal engagement with her before his departure, but her mother interposed, and after a serious conversation the matter was delayed until his return.

As the time of his departure drew near, Benjamin

called upon the Governor for letters of introduction and credit, which he had promised, but they were not ready. He called again, and they were still unwritten. At last, just as he was leaving, he called at his door, and his secretary, Dr Baird, came out, and said, "The Governor is engaged upon important business now, but he will be at Newcastle before the *Annis* reaches there, and will deliver the letters to you there."

As soon as they reached Newcastle, Benjamin went to the Governor's lodgings for the letters, but was told by his secretary that he was engaged, and should be under the necessity of sending the letters to him on board the ship, before she weighed anchor. Benjamin was somewhat puzzled by this unexpected turn of affairs, but he did not dream of deception or dishonesty. He returned to the vessel, and awaited her departure. Soon after her canvas was flung to the breeze, he went to the captain and inquired for the letters.

"I understand," said he, "that Colonel French brought letters on board from the Governor. I suppose some of them are directed to my care."

"Yes," replied the captain, "Colonel French brought a parcel of letters on board, and they were all put into the bag with others, so that I cannot tell whether any of them are for you or not. But you shall have an opportunity, before we reach England, of looking them over for yourself."

"I thank you," answered Benjamin; "that will be all that is necessary." And he yielded himself up to enjoyment for the remainder of the voyage, without the least suspicion of disappointment and trouble.



When they entered the English Channel, the captain, true to his promise, allowed Benjamin to examine the bag of letters. He found several on which his name was written, as under his care, and some others he judged, from the handwriting, came from the Governor. One of them was addressed to Baskett, the King's printer, and another to a stationer, and these two, Benjamin was confident, were for him to take. In all he took seven or eight from the bag.

They arrived in London on the 24th of December 1724, when Benjamin lacked about a month of being nineteen years old. Soon after he landed, he called upon the stationer to whom one of the letters was directed: "A letter, sir, from Governor Keith, of Pennsylvania, America!"

"I don't know such a person," replied the stationer, at the same time receiving the letter.

"Oh, this is from Riddlesden!" said he, on opening it. "I have lately found him to be a complete rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any letters from him." And he handed back the letter to Benjamin, turned upon his heel and left, to wait upon a customer.

Benjamin was astonished and mortified. He had not the least suspicion that he was bearing any other than the Governor's letter, and he was almost bewildered for a moment. The thought flashed into his mind that the Governor had deceived him. In a few moments his thoughts brought together the acts of the Governor in the matter, and now he could see clearly evidence of insincerity and duplicity. He immediately sought out Mr Denham, a merchant, who came over in the *Annis* with him, and gave him a history of the affair.

“Governor Keith is a notorious deceiver,” said Mr Denham. “I do not think he wrote a single letter for you, nor intended to do it. He has been deceiving you from beginning to end.”

“He pretended to have many acquaintances here,” added Benjamin, “to whom he promised to give me letters of credit, and I supposed that they would render me valuable assistance.”

“Letters of credit!” exclaimed Denham. “It is a ludicrous idea. How could he write letters of credit, when he has no credit of his own to give? No one who knows him has the least confidence in his character. There is no dependence to be placed upon him in anything. He is entirely irresponsible.”

“What, then, shall I do?” asked Benjamin, with evident concern. “Here I am among strangers, without the means of returning, and what shall I do?”

“I advise you to get employment in a printing-office here for the present. Among the printers here you will improve yourself, and when you return to America, you will set up to greater advantage.”

There was no alternative left for Benjamin but to find work where he could, and make the best of it. Again he had “paid too dear for the whistle,” and must suffer for it.

He took lodgings in Little Britain, at three shillings and sixpence a-week, and very soon obtained work, where he laboured nearly a-year.

At this time, the ability to compose, which he had carefully nurtured, proved of great assistance to him. He was

employed in the printing of Wollaston's "Religion of Nature," when he took exceptions to some of his reasoning, and wrote a dissertation thereon, and printed it, with the title, "A DISSERTATION ON LIBERTY AND NECESSITY, PLEASURE AND PAIN." This pamphlet fell into the hands of one Lyons, a surgeon, author of a book, entitled, "The Infallibility of Human Judgment," and he was so much pleased with it, that he sought out the author, and shewed him marked attention. He introduced him to Dr Mandeville, author of the "Fable of the Bees," and to Dr Pemberton, who promised to take him to see Sir Isaac Newton. Sir Hans Sloane invited him to his house in Bloomsbury Square, and shewed him all his curiosities. In this way, the small pamphlet which he wrote introduced him to distinguished men, which was of much advantage to him.

While he lodged in Little Britain, he made the acquaintance of a bookseller, by the name of Wilcox, who had a very large collection of second-hand books. Benjamin wanted to gain access to them, but he could not command the means to purchase; so he hit upon this plan: He proposed to Wilcox to pay him a certain sum per book for as many as he might choose to take out, read, and return, and Wilcox accepted his offer. In this transaction was involved the principle of the modern circulating library. It was the first instance of lending books on record, and for that reason becomes an interesting fact. It was another of the influences that served to send him forward in a career of honour and fame.

When he first entered the printing-house in London, he

did presswork. There were fifty workmen in the establishment, and all of them but Benjamin were great beer-drinkers; yet he could lift more, and endure more fatigue, than any of them. His companion at the press was a notorious drinker, and consumed daily "a pint of beer before breakfast, a pint at breakfast with his food, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work,"—in all, six pints per day. They had an alehouse boy always in attendance upon the workmen.

"A detestable habit," said Benjamin to his fellow-pressman, "and a very expensive one, too."

"I couldn't endure the wear and tear of this hard work without it," replied the toper.

"You could accomplish more work, and perform it better, by drinking nothing but cold water," rejoined Benjamin. "There is nothing like it to make one strong and healthy."

"Fudge! It may do for a Water-American like you, but Englishmen would become as weak as babes without it."

"That is false," said Benjamin. "With all your drinking *strong* beer in this establishment, you are the weakest set of workmen I ever saw. I have seen *you* tug away to carry a single form of type up and down stairs, when I always carry two. Your beer may be *strong*, but it makes you *weak*."

"You Americans are odd fellows, I confess," added the beer-drinker; "and you stick to your opinions."

"But look here, my good fellow," continued Benjamin.

“Do you not see that the bodily strength afforded by beer can be only in proportion to the grain or flour of the barley dissolved in the water of which it is made? There must be more flour in a pennyworth of bread than there is in a whole quart of beer; therefore, if you eat that with a pint of water, it will give you more strength than two or three pints of beer. Is it not so?”

The man was obliged to acknowledge that it appeared to be so.

Benjamin continued: “You see that I am supplied with a large porringer of hot water-gruel, sprinkled with pepper, crumbled with bread, and a bit of butter in it, for just the price of a pint of beer, three-halfpence. Now, honestly, is not this much better for me, and for you, than the same amount of beer?”

Thus Benjamin thorned his companions with arguments against the prevailing habit of beer-drinking. Gradually he acquired an influence over many of them, by precept and example, and finally they abandoned their old habit, and followed his better way of living. He wrought a thorough reformation in the printing-office; and the fact shews what one young man can do in a good cause, if he will but set his face resolutely in that direction. Benjamin possessed the firmness, independence, and moral courage to carry out his principles,—just the thing which many a youth of his age lack, and consequently make shipwreck of their hopes.

The only amusement which Benjamin seems to have enjoyed as much as he did literary recreation, was swimming. From his boyhood he delighted to be in the water, perform-

ing wonderful feats, and trying his skill in various ways. At one time he let up his kite, and, taking the string in his hand, lay upon his back on the top of the water, when the kite drew him a mile in a very agreeable manner. At another time he lay floating upon his back, and slept for an hour by the watch. The skill which he had acquired in the art of swimming won him a reputation in England. On several occasions he exhibited his remarkable attainments of this kind, and the result was that he was applied to by Sir William Wyndham to teach his two sons to swim. Some advised him to open a swimming-school, and make it his profession; but he very wisely concluded to leave the water to the fish, and confine himself to the land.

Benjamin had been in London nearly eighteen months, when Mr Denham, the merchant of whom we have spoken, proposed to him to return to Philadelphia, and act in the capacity of book-keeper for him, and offered him fifty pounds a-year, with the promise to promote him, and finally establish him in business. Benjamin had a high respect for Mr Denham, and the new field of labour appeared to him inviting, so that he accepted the proposition with little hesitation, and made preparations to leave England, quitting for ever, as he thought, the art of printing, which he had thoroughly learned.

Forty years after Benjamin worked in Palmer's printing-office, he visited England in the service of his country, widely known as a sagacious statesman and profound philosopher. He took occasion to visit the old office where he once laboured with the beer-drinkers, and, stepping up to the



press on which he worked month after month, he said :  
“Come, my friends, we will drink together. It is now forty years since I worked, like you, at this press, as a journeyman printer.” With these words, he sent out for a gallon of porter, and they drank together according to the custom of the times. That press, on which he worked in London, is now in the Patent-office at Washington.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

## FAREWELL TO ENGLAND.

ON the 23d day of July, 1726, Benjamin sailed for Philadelphia, in company with Mr Denham. After a successful and rather pleasant voyage of nearly three months, they reached Philadelphia, much to the satisfaction of Benjamin, who always enjoyed his stay there. He was now twenty years of age.

“Ah ! is it you, Benjamin ? I am glad to see you back again,” said Keimer, as his old journeyman made his appearance ; and he shook his hand as if his heart was in it. “I began to think you had forsaken us.”

“Not yet,” replied Benjamin. “I think too much of Philadelphia to forsake it yet.”

“Want work at your old business, I suppose ?” added Keimer. “I have plenty of it. You see I have improved things since you were here ; my shop is well supplied with stationery, plenty of new types, and a good business !”

“I see that you have made considerable advance,” replied Benjamin. “I am glad that you prosper.”

“And I shall be glad to employ you, as none of my men are complete masters of the business.”

“But I have relinquished my old trade,” answered Benjamin. “I——”

“Given up the printing business!” interrupted Keimer. “Why is that?”

“I have made arrangements with Mr Denham to keep his books, and serve him generally in the capacity of clerk.”

“I am sorry for that, and I think you will be eventually. It is a very uncertain business.”

“Well, I have undertaken it, for better or worse,” said Benjamin, as he rose to leave the shop.

As he was going down the street, who should he meet but Governor Keith, who had been removed from his office, and was now only a common citizen. The ex-Governor appeared both surprised and ashamed at seeing him, and passed by him without speaking.

Benjamin was quite ashamed to meet Miss Read, since he had not been true to his promise. Though he had been absent eighteen months, he had written her but a single letter, and that was penned soon after his arrival in London, to inform her that he should not return at present. His long absence and silence convinced her that he had ceased to regard her with affection; in consequence of which, at the earnest persuasion of her parents, she married a potter by the name of Rogers. He turned out to be a miserable fellow, and she lived with him only a short time. He incurred

heavy debts, ran away to the West Indies to escape from his creditors, and there died.

Miss Read was disconsolate and sad, and Benjamin pitied her sincerely, inasmuch as he considered himself to blame in the matter. He was not disposed to shield himself from the censure of the family, had they been disposed to administer any; but the old lady took all the blame upon herself, because she prevented an engagement, and persuaded her daughter to marry Rogers.

These circumstances rendered his meeting with Miss Read less unpleasant, so far as his own want of fidelity was concerned. His intimacy with the family was renewed, and they frequently invited him there to tea, and often sought his advice on business of importance.

Mr Denham opened a store in Water Street, and Benjamin entered upon his new business with high hopes. He made rapid progress in acquiring knowledge of traffic, and soon became expert in keeping accounts and selling goods. But in February, 1727, when Benjamin was twenty-one years of age, both he and his employer were prostrated by sickness. Benjamin's disease was pleurisy, and his life was despaired of, though he unexpectedly recovered. Mr Denham lingered along for some time, and died. His decease was the occasion of closing the store and throwing Benjamin out of business. It was a sad disappointment, but not wholly unlike the previous checkered experience of his life. He had become used to "ups and downs."

As a token of his confidence and esteem, Mr Denham left a small legacy to Benjamin,—a fact that speaks well for the

young man's faithfulness. And here it should be said, that, whatever faults the hero of our story had, he always served his employers with such ability and fidelity as won their approbation and confidence. Unlike many youth, who care not for their employers' interests if they but receive their wages and keep their places, he ever did the best he could for those who employed him. He proved himself trustworthy and efficient; and here is found one secret of his success.

In his disappointment, Benjamin sought the advice of his brother-in-law, Captain Homes, who happened to be in Philadelphia at the time.

"I advise you to return to your old business," said he. "I suppose you can readily get work here, can you not?"

"All I want," Benjamin answered. "Keimer was very anxious to employ me when I returned from England, and I dare say that he would hire me now."

"Then I would close a bargain with him at once, were I in your place. I think you will succeed better at your trade than in any other business, and perhaps the way will soon be prepared for you to open a printing-office of your own."

This advice was followed without delay, and Keimer was eager to employ him. At the outset, he offered him extra wages to take the entire management of his printing-office, so that he (Keimer) might attend more closely to his stationer's shop. The offer was accepted, and Benjamin commenced his duties immediately. He soon found, however, that Keimer's design in offering him so large wages was, that the hands he already employed might be improved under his experience, when it would not be necessary for

him to hire so competent a person. The facts shew us that good workmen can command employment and high wages, when poor ones are obliged to beg their bread.

As the workmen improved under Benjamin's supervision, Keimer evidently began to think of discharging him, or cutting down his wages. On paying his second quarter's wages, he told him that he could not continue to pay him so much. He became less civil, frequently found fault, and plainly tried to make Benjamin's stay uncomfortable, so that he would leave. At length a rare opportunity offered for him to make trouble. An unusual noise in the street one day caused Benjamin to put his head out of the window to see what was the matter. Keimer happened to be in the street, and seeing him, he cried out, "Put your head in, and attend to your business;" and added some reproachful words which all in the street heard. Then, hastening up into the office, he continued his insulting language.

"Men who work for me must give better heed to their business," said he. "If they care more for a noise in the street than for their work, it is time they left."

"I am ready to leave any time you please," retorted Benjamin, who was considerably nettled by such treatment. "I am not dependent on you for a living, and I shall not be treated in this way long, I assure you."

"That, indeed!" exclaimed Keimer. "You would not stay another hour if it were not for our agreement, in accordance with which I now warn you that, at the end of a quarter's time, I shall hire you no more."

"You need not regret that you cannot send me away to-

day," answered Benjamin. "I shall work no longer for a man who will treat me thus ;" and, taking his hat, he left. As he passed down, he requested Meredith, one of the hands, to bring some things which he left behind to his lodgings.

In the evening Meredith went to see Benjamin, carrying the articles referred to.

"What shall you do now?" Meredith inquired.

"I shall return to Boston forthwith."

"I wouldn't do that. You can do much better here than you can there."

"What can I do here now?"

"Set up business for yourself."

"I have no money to do it with."

"My father has," said Meredith; "and I will go into company with you if he will furnish the means. I am not acquainted with the business, and you are; so I will furnish the capital, and you shall manage the concern, and we will share the profits equally."

"Your father will never do it," suggested Benjamin.

"I am confident that he will," replied Meredith. "He has a high opinion of you, and he wants a good opportunity to set me up. I will ask him, at any rate."

"I would like such an enterprise myself," added Benjamin; "but can we succeed against Keimer? He will now do all he can to crush me."

"He will be crushed himself before long," answered Meredith. "I happen to know that he is in debt for all the property in his hands. He keeps his shop miserably,



too ; often sells without profit in order to raise money ; and trusts people without keeping accounts. He will fail as surely as he keeps on in this way."

"I will agree to your plan if you can make it work," said Benjamin. "See your father immediately, and let me know the result."

Accordingly, Meredith saw his father, and he was ready to furnish the necessary capital, because of his high regard for Benjamin.

"I am the more ready to do this," said he to Benjamin, afterwards, "because of your good influence over my son. You have prevailed upon him to leave off drinking to excess, and I hope he will be persuaded, by your more intimate connexion in business, to reform entirely."

It was settled that they should set up business as soon as they could procure the necessary articles from England.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### SETTING UP BUSINESS.

AGREEABLY to the arrangement with Meredith, Benjamin made out an inventory of articles, which were immediately ordered from England. In the meantime, he expected to find work at Bradford's printing-office, but was disappointed.

It was only a few days, however, before he received a very civil message from Keimer, in which he said, "that old friends should not part for a few words, the effect of sudden

passion," and urged him to return. The fact was, he had a prospect of being employed to print some paper-money in New Jersey, which would require cuts, and various types, that Benjamin only could supply, and therefore he wanted to re-engage him. Benjamin was not quite inclined to accept the proposition at first, but Meredith urged him to do it, on the ground that he himself would become better acquainted with the business in consequence; he therefore agreed to return.

It was several months before the new types arrived from London, and Benjamin continued in Keimer's service. Most of the time he spent with his employer at Burlington, executing the paper-money, and there made many friends, among whom was Judge Allen, the Secretary of the Province, several members of the Assembly, and the Surveyor-General, all of whom were of service to him when he set up business for himself. They were much pleased with Benjamin's intelligence and fidelity, so that they frequently invited him to their houses, while the ignorance and rudeness of Keimer so disgusted them that they took little notice of him.

"You are completely master of your business," said the Surveyor-General to him; "and success is before you."

"I have improved my opportunities," modestly replied Benjamin, "to become as well acquainted with my business as I could. This half way of doing things I do not like."

"I commenced business in a very humble way," continued the Surveyor-General, "without expecting ever to possess such an estate as I do now."

"What was your business?"

“I wheeled clay for the brick-makers, and had not the opportunity of going to school at all in my boyhood. I did not learn to write until I became of age. I acquired my knowledge of surveying when I carried a chain for surveyors, who were pleased with my desire to learn the business, and assisted me. By constant industry and close application, with a good deal of perseverance, I have succeeded in reaching the place where you now see me.”

“That is all the way any one can work his way up to an honourable position,” said Benjamin.

“True, very true, and I am glad to see that you understand it. I am confident that you will beat this man Keimer at the business, if you go on as you have begun.”

This example of industry and perseverance was encouraging to Benjamin in his circumstances. It was exactly suited to confirm him in his very proper views of industry and fidelity.

Meredith and Benjamin settled with Keimer, and left him just before their types arrived, without letting him into the secret of their plans. The first intimation he had of their intentions was the opening of their printing-office near the market.

In the office, Franklin suspended the following lines, which he composed:—

“All ye who come this curious art to see,  
To handle anything must careful be ;  
Lest by a slight touch, ere you are aware,  
You may do mischief which you can't repair.  
Lo ! this advice we give to every stranger !  
Look on and welcome, but to touch there's danger.”

This singular notice attracted some attention, and elicited remarks from different visitors.

In order to win the confidence of the public, and secure their patronage, Benjamin resolved at the outset to exhibit to all beholders several qualities which guarantee success, namely, industry, economy, integrity, and close application to his business. All of them had become habits with him, and hence it was easy for him to conduct in this manner.

In respect to industry, he laboured incessantly. Even some of his hours that ought to have been devoted to sleep, were spent in his office at hard work.

Mention being made of the new printing-house at the "Merchants' Every-night Club," "It will prove a failure," said one.

"Of course it will," added another. "Two such young fellows cannot get business enough to support them, with two established printers here."

This was the general opinion. But Dr Baird, who was present, said, "It will prove a success, for the industry of that Franklin is superior to anything I ever saw of the kind. I see him still at work when I go home from club, and he is at work again before his neighbours are out of bed."

This remark was appreciated by the members, and soon after one of them offered to supply the young printers with stationery, if they desired to open a shop.

It was his experience, doubtless, that caused him, years afterwards, to give the following advice to a "young tradesman :"—

"The most trifling actions that affect a man's credit are

to be regarded. The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or nine at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer; but if he sees you at a billiard-table, or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day; demands it, before he can receive it, in a lump."

He also wrote: "He that idly loses five shillings' worth of time loses five shillings, and might as prudently throw five shillings into the sea."

Franklin always ascribed his industrious habits to the frequent counsels of his father on the subject, which were generally closed by repeating the text of Scripture, "Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men,"—a prophecy that was singularly fulfilled in his own case, as we shall see hereafter, for he had the honour of standing before *five* kings, and even dined with the King of Denmark.

His economy was equal to his industry. He arrayed himself in the plainest manner, although he aimed to look neat and tidy. His board was simple and cheap, and everything about his business was graduated on the most economical principles. In order to save expense, and at the same time shew the public that he was not proud, and above his business, he wheeled home the paper which he bought. This single act had its influence in gaining the public confidence. For when a young man gets above his business, he is quite sure to have a fall.

After he married Miss Read, and commenced housekeeping, he still adhered to the same principle of economy.

Instead of doing as many young men do at this era of life, living beyond their income, he continued frugal. He said of himself and wife, "We kept no idle servants, our table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was for a long time bread and milk (no tea), and I ate it out of a twopenny earthen porringer, with a pewter spoon." Thus he reduced to practice the couplet which he wrote:—

"Vessels large may venture more,  
But little boats should keep near shore."

And qualified himself to pen such maxims as the following:—

"It is easier to suppress the first desire, than to satisfy all that follow it."

"It is as truly folly for the poor to ape the rich, as for the frog to swell in order to equal the ox."

"Pride breakfasts with plenty, dines with poverty, and sups with infamy."

His integrity in transacting business was no less marked. Strict honesty characterized all his dealings with men. An exalted idea of justice pervaded his soul. His word of honour was as good as his note of hand. Even his disposition to castigate and censure in his writings, so manifest in Boston at seventeen years of age, and which his father rebuked, was overcome. After he set up a paper in Philadelphia, a gentleman handed him an article for its columns.

"I am very busy now," said Franklin, "and you will confer a favour by leaving it for my perusal at my leisure."



“That I will do,” replied the writer, “and call again to-morrow.”

“The next day the author called. “What is your opinion of my article?” he asked.

“Why, sir, I am sorry to say that I cannot publish it,” answered Franklin.

“Why not? What is the matter with it?”

“It is highly scurrilous and defamatory,” replied Franklin. “But being at a loss, on account of my poverty, whether to reject it or not, I thought I would put it to this issue. At night, when my work was done, I bought a two-penny loaf, on which I supped heartily, and then, wrapping myself in my great coat, slept very soundly on the floor until morning, when another loaf and mug of water afforded a pleasant breakfast. Now, sir, since I can live very comfortably in this manner, why should I prostitute my press to personal hatred or party passion for a more luxurious living?”

Their business prospered well; but Meredith's intemperate habits were so strong, that he was frequently seen intoxicated in the streets, which occasioned much gossip about town concerning the prospects of their success. To add to their embarrassment, Meredith's father was unable to meet the last payment of a hundred pounds upon the printing-house, and they were sued. But William Coleman and Robert Grace, two of Franklin's companions, came to his assistance.

“We will lend you the means to take the business into your own hands,” said Coleman. “It is much to your dis-

credit to be connected with Meredith, who is seen reeling through the streets so often."

"But I cannot honourably propose a dissolution of partnership," replied Franklin, "while there is any prospect that the Merediths will fulfil their part of the contract, because I feel myself under great obligations for what they have done."

"They will not be able to fulfil the contract," said Grace; "that is out of the question."

"That is my opinion," responded Franklin; "still, I must wait and see what they do. If they fail to meet their obligations, then I shall feel at liberty to act otherwise."

The matter was left here for some weeks, when Franklin said to Meredith, meaning to sound him on the matter of dissolving the partnership, "Perhaps your father is dissatisfied with the part you have undertaken in this affair of ours, and is unwilling to advance for you and me what he would for you alone. If that is the case, tell me and I will resign the whole to you, and go about my business."

"No," he answered, "my father has really been disappointed, and is really unable; and I am unwilling to distress him further. I see this is a business I am unfit for. I was bred a farmer; and it was folly in me to come to town, and put myself, at thirty years of age, an apprentice to learn a new trade. Many of our Welsh people (he was a Welshman) are going to settle in North Carolina, where land is cheap. I am inclined to go with them, and follow my old employment; you may find friends to assist you. If you will take the debts of the company upon you, return to my

father the hundred pounds he has advanced, pay my little personal debts, and give me thirty pounds and a new saddle, I will relinquish the partnership, and leave the whole in your hands."

Franklin accepted this proposition, and, with the aid of his two friends, was soon established in business alone. His patronage increased rapidly, he was soon able to pay off his debts. And in a very short time he commanded the chief printing business of the town.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### CONCLUSION.

WE have thus far followed the subject of this little volume from the time he paid *too dear for his whistle*, to the period when he was well established in business. We have seen what his character was as a PRINTER BOY, and hence his promise of success. He was not perfect by any means; on the other hand, he had marked failings. Yet, underneath the whole, we have discovered certain qualities that are indispensable to eminence in one's vocation. And now it remains to see, briefly, whether the principle we advocate was true in his case, namely, "that the boy is father of the man." To do this, we shall pass over a series of years, and take a succinct view of his position and influence in middle and advanced life.

It should be recorded first, however, that the difficulty

between himself and his brother James was adjusted ten years after his first visit to Boston. James had removed and settled in Newport, where he was fast declining in health, and Benjamin went thither to see him. Their past differences were forgotten, and their interview was signalized by mutual forgiveness. It was then that Benjamin promised to take his brother's little son, ten years old, after the father was no more, and bring him up to the printing business. This pledge he fulfilled, doing even more for the lad than he promised, for he sent him to school two or three years before he took him into the office, and finally he established him in business. This, certainly, was a happy termination of a quarrel that was creditable to neither party. The result was decisive evidence that both parties deplored their conduct towards each other.

While he was yet a young man, he was promoted to different posts of distinction. He filled various offices in Philadelphia, and served the State of Pennsylvania in several public ways, in all of which he did himself honour. He devoted a portion of his time to philosophical studies, in which he earned a world-wide fame. His mind was ever busy in projects to benefit society, and no work was too humble for him to do for the good of others. At one time he is found inventing a stove for domestic use, called afterward the Franklin stove, with which Governor Thomas was so well pleased that he offered him a patent for the sole vending of them for a series of years; but Franklin refused it, on the ground, "*that, as we enjoy great advantages from the invention of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to*

*serve others by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously.*" This was another instance of his remarkable generosity, and it reminds us of that incident of his life in France, when an English clergyman asked him him for pecuniary assistance. He gave him liberally, remarking, "Some time or other you may have an opportunity of assisting with an equal sum a stranger who has equal need of it. Do so. By that means you may discharge any obligation you may suppose yourself under to me. *Enjoin him to do the same on occasion.* By pursuing such a practice, much good may be done with little money. Let kind offices go round. Mankind are all of a family."

At another time he is engaged in improving the lamps that light the city, and devising ways of cleaning the streets. Then, again, he is originating a system of volunteer militia for the defence of his country. Extinguishing fires, also, is a subject that commands his thoughts, and he organized the first fire company in the land. Again, the education of youth demands his time, and he labours to introduce a system of schools, and, finally, founds a University. Thus the humblest acts of a good citizen were performed in connexion with the nobler deeds of the philosopher and statesman.

The following is a brief synopsis of the offices he filled, and the honours he won:—

HE WAS LEGISLATOR FOR PENNSYLVANIA IN 1732, WHEN ONLY TWENTY-SIX YEARS OF AGE.

HE FOUNDED THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

DEPUTY POSTMASTER-GENERAL IN 1752.

INVENTOR OF LIGHTNING-RODS.

WAS ELECTED A FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

ORIGINATOR OF THE VOLUNTEER MILITIA.

COLONEL OF MILITIA.

MINISTER TO THE COURT OF ENGLAND IN 1764.

MEMBER OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS IN 1775.

MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY TO FRANCE IN 1776.

CONCLUDED FIRST TREATY FOR AMERICA IN 1778.

RECEIVED THE DEGREE OF LL.D. FROM OXFORD UNIVERSITY.

MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY TO FRANCE IN 1778.

ONE OF FIVE TO DRAFT THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

HELPED TO FRAME THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

A LEADER IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

CALLED THE "NESTOR OF AMERICA" BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF FRANCE.

ADMITTED TO THE HIGHEST LITERARY ASSEMBLIES OF EUROPE.

LIKE WASHINGTON, "FIRST IN WAR, FIRST IN PEACE, AND FIRST IN THE HEARTS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN."

HONOURED AS A GREAT PHILOSOPHER, SAGACIOUS STATESMAN, AND SINCERE PHILANTHROPIST.

In reading the history of the United States, no name is more conspicuous than that of Franklin. His agency is everywhere seen and acknowledged in laying the foundation of her institutions, and achieving her glories. The memory



of no patriot and philosopher has been more dear to generations that have come and gone since his day. Abroad, as well as at home, he was honoured. At one time, in France, "prints, medallion portraits, and busts of Franklin were multiplied throughout France; and rings, bracelets, canes, and snuff-boxes, bearing his likeness, were worn or carried quite generally." In England, and other parts of Europe, similar homage was paid to his greatness. Since that period his statue has been erected in the halls of learning and legislation, literary societies have adopted his name, to give them pre-eminence, and numerous towns have been called after him. The author's native place was named in honour of Franklin, who afterwards presented the town with a valuable library that is still in existence. On being informed by a friend that this town had adopted his name, he inquired what sort of a present would be acceptable to the inhabitants, as an acknowledgment of their respect and homage. The friend suggested that a *bell* might prove a timely gift, as they were erecting a new house of worship. But Franklin thought otherwise, and decided to present a library. He jocosely remarked, in the letter which accompanied the books, that he "*supposed a town that would adopt his name, must be more fond of sense than sound.*"

It would multiply the pages of this volume beyond its designed limits to enumerate all the public posts of honour that Franklin adorned, and all the marks of respect that had been paid to his memory. This brief reference to the more prominent of these is sufficient to afford the reader a view of the REMARKABLE MAN, and to illustrate the force of

energy, industry, integrity, and perseverance, in human destiny.

The great George Washington wrote to him:—"If to be venerated for benevolence, if to be admired for talents, if to be esteemed for patriotism, if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know that you have not lived in vain. And I flatter myself that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of your life to be assured, that, so long as I retain my memory, you will be recollected with respect, veneration, and affection, by your sincere friend, George Washington."

Congress, the American parliament, was in session when Franklin died, and when his death was announced, it was resolved that a badge of mourning be worn for one month, "as a mark of veneration due to the memory of a citizen whose native genius was not more an ornament to human nature than his various exertions of it have been precious to science, to freedom, and to his country."

In France, Condorcet eulogized him in the Academy of Science, and Mirabeau in the National Assembly. The latter said:—"Antiquity would have erected altars to this great and powerful genius."

In his riper years, Franklin sincerely regretted the doubts of his youth and early manhood respecting religion. The sentiments that were poured into his young mind by fond parental lips, he came to respect and cherish. He went to the house of God on the Sabbath with great constancy; and, as if recollecting the sin of his youth, he wrote to his

daughter, "*Go constantly to church, whoever preaches.*" His own experience taught him that it was dangerous and wicked to forsake the sanctuary. He became interested in every good work. His influence and his purse were offered to sustain Christianity. He appreciated every benevolent enterprise, and bade them God-speed. On one occasion the celebrated Whitefield preached in behalf of an orphan asylum, which he proposed to erect in Georgia. Franklin was not in full sympathy with the plan, because he thought it should be erected in Pennsylvania, and the orphans brought there. Still, he listened to the eminent preacher unprejudiced, and when the collection was taken, at the close of the meeting, he emptied his pockets of all the money he had, which consisted of "a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold."

He sympathized deeply with the poor and needy, and espoused the cause of the oppressed in every land. He was the first president of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, and both his hand and heart were pledged to the cause of freedom. One of his biographers, summing up his character in these particulars, says, "He was bold, consistent, active, and greatly in advance of his age. From his Quaker brethren in Philadelphia, he contracted all their zeal in behalf of humanity, although in his mind it put on the aspect of plain practical beneficence. He was ever foremost in all humane enterprises. He was never misled, through sympathy with a majority, into the support of measures which, though popular, were inconsistent with a high-toned Christian morality. He was the champion of the Indians,

when to advocate their cause was to displease many. He was one of the earliest opponents of the slave trade and slavery. He omitted no opportunity to protest against war and its iniquity, and he branded as piracy the custom of privateering, however sanctioned by international usages. As a statesman and philosopher, his name is imperishable. As an active benefactor of his race, he is entitled to its lasting gratitude. As one of the founders of the American Union, he must ever be held in honourable remembrance by all who prize American institutions. As the zealous foe to oppression in all its forms, he merits the thankful regard of good men of all ages and climes."

He carried his reverence for God and his regard for Christianity into the high places of authority. He proposed the first day of fasting and prayer ever observed in Pennsylvania, and wrote the proclamation for the secretary of state. When the convention to frame the constitution of the United States met in Philadelphia, in 1787, he introduced a motion into that body for daily prayers, which, strange to say, was rejected. In support of his motion, he made the following memorable address, which fairly illustrates his usual disposition to recognize God in all human affairs:—

"In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard; and they were graciously answered. All of us, who were engaged in the struggle, must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favour. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of con-

suiting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend, or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time; and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, *that God governs in the affairs of men*. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can arise without His aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings, that 'except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this; and I also believe, that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel; we shall be divided by our little, partial, local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a bye-word down to future ages. And, what is worse, mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing government by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war, and conquest. I therefore beg leave to move, that henceforth, prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business: and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service."

His confidence in the Christian religion, and his regard for purity of conduct, did not diminish as he drew near the grave. On the other hand, he bore earnest testimony to the faith of his fathers until the close of his life, and ere he died, renewed his vindication of the Scriptures, in the following circumstances:—

A young man called to see him, as he lay upon his death-bed, scarcely able to articulate. Dr Franklin welcomed him with a benignant look, which he was wont to cast upon the young, and imparted some good advice to him.

“What is your opinion with regard to the truth of the Scriptures?” inquired the young man, who was somewhat sceptical.

Franklin replied, although in a very feeble state, “Young man, my advice to you is, that you cultivate an acquaintance with, and a firm belief in, the Holy Scriptures;—this is your certain interest.”

THE END.



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